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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

To catch a liar takes wizardry, says study

Saturday, October 16, 2004 • 24 pages / vol. 19 / no. 211

Garcia's US assets on hold

General's properties include 2 New York condos, Ohio house

By Philip C. Tubeza, Alexis Pajo and Carlito Pablo

THE GOVERNMENT of the United States has "put on hold" the real estate holdings of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia in New York and Ohio pending the threats request of the Philippines' Department of Justice, through the MLAT Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

Solicitor General Alberto Benipayo made the announcement yesterday, adding that US authorities were also looking for the Senior Armed Forces comptroller's other assets there, including bank accounts.

The US Department of Homeland Security has so far identified three Garcia properties—a $765,000 17-unit fully furnished condominium at 302 Park Avenue, New York; a $750,000 apartment at 232 East 84th Street, also in New York; and a house at 625 Vincent Drive, Pinetree, Ohio, of still undetermined value.

"These will be raided next to no since we got [a conviction] against Garcia [before our courts]. The US is still looking for his other assets," Benipayo said.

On Thursday, the Court of Appeals, acting on a request by the Anti-Money Laundering Council, ordered a freeze on the 46 accounts of Garcia and his family in seven local banks. It also ordered the Land Transportation Office to prevent the sale of the Garcias' eight vehicles.

But before the freeze order was issued, Garcia and his wife managed to withdraw P10 million from their account at the AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc.

Benipayo said he would ask the appellate court to extend its 20-day freeze order when it expires.

In a month or so, he said, the Ombudsman would have finished its investigation and would probably file criminal cases against Garcia before the Sandiganbayan.

FOLKS WHO LIVE ON THE HILL. The house on top of the hill, No. 7, Cliff Drive in Barangay Loakan Proper in Baguio City, is owned by Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, or so neighbors in the area say. Enclosed by high walls, the property has a granite, a main driveway and another at the back. The Garcia summer home is one of seven villas in the two-story houses located on an isolated ridge 15kh with pine tree cover. To reach the property, one has to drive through the Loakan Airport and negotiate a one-lane road sandwiched between cut earth terraces and small cottages (where a wrong or the turn toward Cliffside. Those who make it will be impressed by the difference between the main state's small homes and the large gated compounds up there. Located at Sitio Dagupan, 1 00 meters from Fort Del Pilar, the home of the Philippine Military Academy where Garcia graduated in 1971.

Garcia: Zero combat but exposed to millions

By Ed Zamora

GARCIA Garcia was not bragging when she told US authorities that her husband had received "passionate money" from those awarded military contracts.

In fact, many in the Armed Forces believe that she was just "reading a line."

Her remarks are contained in the sworn statement of Mrs. Garcia which is dated 8 in the Ombudsman's confidential report on her husband.

Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, who is due to retire on Nov. 18, spent 33 years in engineering, logistics and the comptrollership of the AFP. In these years, he was exposed to money in the multimillions for the construction of roads, bridges, houses, school buildings and even hospitals for the military as well as for civilian government.

Garcia belonged to the army but not once did he experience combat. He has a total of 34 medals and commendations, including three Distinguished Service Stars, the third highest military medal awarded for bravery in combat.

A 1971 graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, Garcia spent 18 years in the engineering brigade. The AFP said that by the time Garcia left to join his engineering club in 1979 and again in 1985.

He was tied the apex of his career in the engineering corps when he served

4 ex-AFP chiefs of staff to be questioned

THE FOUR former Armed Forces chiefs whose ranks led Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia served as comptroller will first be called to Feb. 2005 simply. The head of the House committee on national defense looking into alleged military corruption said yesterday.

Penafrancia Rep. Rodolfo Valles said his committee would "eventually" summon retired Generals Diomedio "Mike" Villanueva, Ret. Gen. Dionisio Santiago and Roy Garcia, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes to explain how Garcia managed to amass wealth in record-breaking amount.

For starters, Valles said, the immediate AFP chief of staff, Gen. Narciso Abaya, would appear at the House inquiry on Monday when the committee on national defense and on books to review the hearing on graft and corruption in the military.

Reyes, who had Garcia as his comptroller until the latter was transferred to another post earlier this year following the discovery of his alleged unexplained wealth.

"We will eventually invite the former chiefs since, according to the statement of [AFP vice-chief Adm. Ernesto] De Los Reyes, all the commanders of the

Scandal may jump over to Crame

By Christian V. Esguerra

WILL THE scam now hamstring Camp Aguinaldo swing over seven Bilos and close into Camp Crame?

It just might, judging from the way some police officers are talking.

Despite the supposedly meager income of police generals and colonels, the officers' quarters at Camp Crame looks like a sprawling car showroom. One gauge boasts of at least three cars,

one of them a luxury vehicle.

Another favorite source of income is the monthly allowance every officer receives "over and above" his regular salary, a top Philippine National Police general told the Inquirer yesterday.

And the officers don't even have to sign receipts when they get the allowances every 15th and 30th of the month, he said.

Another gold mine is the so-called "hired contractor" which has enabled some to pocket money intended for office supplies, including paper and furniture, and for gasoline intended for cars supposed to be used in chasing after lawbreakers.

The disclosure about how some PNP officers are able to live in style came amid recent allegations by the Ombudsman and Congress into alleged corruption among Armed Forces officers at Camp Aguinaldo just across the highway.

Palace firmly behind Reyes, rejects recall

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

LAGING it would not make a sacrificial lamb out of anyone "just to satisfy the propaganda needs of others." Malacañang yesterday reiterated its full support and confidence of the appointment of Defense and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes amid speculation about the sources of his P1.8 million assets.

"We have said before that we would not be inclined into sacrificing any cabinet because of unverified hearsay," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said in a press briefing. Bunye added that Reyes himself had sufficiently answered the allegations against him.

He was echoing the statement of President Macapagal-Arroyo on Wednesday that she is standing the assignment of Cabinet officials to face the "least effective" means of removing officials. She said this is connected to

DepED DILEMMA
'So what do you charge them with, stupidity?'

By Dona Z. Pazybuga

SURE! do you charge with the publics, workers, and the Department of Education evaluators who appointed a history teacher with 63 years?

Stupidity?

After confirming that a student, which had been in next to public high schools for the last seven years did not take notes, the said shop would be to go after the persons responsible.

However, DepEd officials are in a bind on how to do this.

Undersecretary Ann Miguel Luz said it was not that easy to build the publics, workers or the DepEd evaluators of the "Says, Boxes, Figures or to Miss Jenny" accountable.

"This will not satisfy Mr. Antonio's Os, Senator Pimentel, Rep. Sabi Gonzago or the others, because they want us to go after the individuals [responsible]. [But] we haven't figured out at this point how possible that is."

GAINING TO SUMMIT! The seventh-long Gaining for while Monkey started on Friday Dusk, time will obstacle from hard, drink, crumbling and tropical invitations. Here a Monkey man says his prayers on the QC Memorial Circle in observance of Ramadan. (Story on Page 6)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2004

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Intermittent rain and thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening with moderate to strong winds from the southwest over Metro Manila. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Source: PAGASA

Second **FRONTPAGE**

Text to your friends in Inquirer news coverage messages (SMS) (Globe) or (Smart)

GMA: Peace is at hand in South

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo marked the start of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan yesterday by saying the government was close to reaching a peaceful settlement with Moro rebels in the south.

"In Mindanao, peace is at hand," the President said in a Ramadan message to the country's Muslim minority.

"We have a roadmap that is working and one which leads calm in the conflict-ridden areas to maintain," she said, referring to a ceasefire signed with the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front in 2002.

Mr Arroyo said the country must pursue through negotiations "a comprehensive and durable solution to the problems" of Mindanao where a Muslim separatist insurgency has been raging for three decades.

"Our dream for our Muslim brothers is for us to live and every day to attain their aspirations for peace and a better life. This shall be my government's unflagging goal," Mr Arroyo said, citing efforts to uplift Muslim communities which are among the most underdeveloped in the country.

The government and the nearly 12,000-strong MILF are due to resume formal peace talks in Malaysia after the month-long Ramadan.

A team of Malaysian security experts is in Mindanao to monitor the ceasefire.

Sporadic clashes and allegations that rebel commanders are sheltering members of the regional Jemaah Islamiyah terror network have strained the peace process.

FIRSTTIME with her relatives inside a mosque in Tagaig, the little girl fasts the whole morning in observing the first day of the month-long fasting season of Ramadan. AFP

As the foreign affairs department, Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo gave the ordered evacuation and consulates abroad to allow their Muslim personnel to observe Ramadan during work hours.

Romulo said that Muslim personnel would be flexible working hours. "They may report for work at about 7:30 a.m. and leave at about 6 p.m.

Adult Muslims are required to fast from sunrise to sunset, abstaining from food, drink, smoking and conjugal relations during the month-long fasting season.

The Philippine embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has revised its office schedule for the entire month.

Under the new set up, the daily eight-hour work week would be reduced to five hours, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., from Saturday to Wednesday and are closed Thursday & Sunday.

On Nov. 11 and 18, the embassy will be closed to public transactions in observance of the Eid el Fitr, the holiday to mark the end of Ramadan.

Regular work hours will resume on Nov. 20. AFP and TJ Burgonio

Military mum on case of Air Force general

By Nicole Puno

FOR the second straight day the Armed Forces of the Philippines preferred to keep mum on why Maj. Gen. Prospero Olivarez was sacked last month and why he was still under investigation.

Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya confirmed that Olivarez, who was relieved of his position as chief of the Philippine Air Force's (PAF) Central Wing based in Puerto Princesa on Sept. 21, was indeed being investigated by the military leadership.

"There is an ongoing investigation and it is not yet finished," Abaya told reporters yesterday during the 50th anniversary of the AFP's Office of the Surgeon Major in Camp Aguinaldo, but did not elaborate on what he said were "complex" complaints.

The same source said a crackdown on corruption among top military and government officials.

"I don't know the specifics of the case but there were complaints and by Olivarez is being investigated. I did not see the case (Olivarez), so I am not ready to talk about it) but it is under investigation by the inspector general," he said.

Abaya said that Olivarez, another member of the Philippine Military Academy Class of 1971, was "already charged with (48) (general headquarters) and the (Headquarters Service Group) for (results of) our investigation will ask him questions during the investigation."

The AFP's inspector general who is tasked to investigate Olivarez, Maj. Gen. Edwin Kalalo, is another member of PMA Class of 1971.

In a radio interview yesterday, Philippine Air Force spokesperson Lt. Col. Andrew Padilla denied reports that Olivarez was under investigation for violating his age.

"My checked this and no one turned in a complaint about his age. We also checked his records and we saw that he really has one more year (before retirement)," Padilla told dzBB.

They also asked the National Bureau Office to verify Olivarez's age. "So far, we have not received any feedback from the NSO," he said.

Another of Olivarez's PMA classmates, Maj. Gen. Ralph Pevey, is under investigation for allegedly falsifying his birth date in his records with the AFP to extend his service beyond the mandatory retirement age of 56.

Olivarez was reportedly born on June 30, 1949, giving him at least one more year in service.

Padilla also denied that Olivarez was under investigation on allegations of graft and corruption. He said they have not received any formal complaint on these allegations.

He denied reports that it was the "Army mafia" of Olivarez's wife which led to the investigation on the general. "I don't know about the Army mafia. I don't know. Gen. Olivarez is probably," he said. With AFP

Tax the rich, exempt the poor—lawmaker

By Carlos Pedro

TAX the rich, not the poor, is the battle cry of a party-list representative who has filed a bill seeking to exempt from income taxes workers earning below P9,000 a day.

Magsaysay said the exemption from paying income taxes would help workers to cope with hard times.

"Those who have more in life should have more in taxes," said Patricia ng Mangagawang Pilipino Rep. Ronaldo Magsaysay, adding that at least 10 million workers will benefit if his bill is passed.

In filing House Bill 3083, Magsaysay said the government itself, through the National Wages and Productivity Commission, has proclaimed that the cost of living for a family of six is P600 per day.

"Cost of living is the amount needed to buy food and other basic necessities," Magsaysay said.

But he noted that current wage levels were not even enough to cover an average family's cost of living.

The minimum wage in the National Capital Region is P350 and the cost of living at least is P5k.

"While the government will lose revenues from this bill, the workers' purchasing power will be increased, resulting in more demand for consumer goods that will also generate an increase in the government's collections of value-added tax on goods and services," Magsaysay said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

SHELL'S Billy Mamaril (right) snipes the ball off SLAM's Marlou Aguilar.

Pinoys ranked 41st in Olympiad

IF RATINGS are going to be the sole basis, then the Philippines has small chances of hiking its Top 10 target in the 38th Chess Olympiad which starts today in Mallorca, Spain.

The Filipinos are ranked only 41st among the 131 teams entered in the men's division of the biennial meet which will run up to Oct. 20. Not to, with its average Elo of 2500, the Philippines is ever ranked lower than Viet. nam (2214) among both Asian entries.

Usually, however, the Philippines has always surprised its seeding, going as high as a share of seventh in the 1998 Thessaloniki, Greece, edition. In Bled, Slovenia, two years ago, the Filipinos wound up 39th, one notch or better than the round behemoths.

This year, the Filipinos should again reunited the top 30 with Grandmasters Eugene Torre and Joey Antonio and GM-elect Mark Paragua manning the first three boards. Completing the team are IM Jayson Gonzales, NM Darwin Layle and FM Emmanuel Sendaan.

The Indios squad, which is ranked only 64th, is composed of WFM Sherrie Joy Londres, WIM Beverly Mendoza Beverly and Lendell Cabais.

Highly rated among Asia and Pacific zone foes are India, seeded 8th, China 16th, Uzbekistan 30th and Vietnam 38th. In the 53rd edition topped again by Russia, China second up fifth.

The GP chess team's campaign is being supported by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines led by president Go Teng Kok and their Manila Defenders, Philippine Sports Commission, First Institution Foundation, Philippine Convention & Visitors Corporation, director Carlito Carvon, Department of Foreign Affairs and Dakim vice president Dody Arespa.

"I'm confident that they would be able to put up a good fight," said Co. **Marlon Bernardino**

Shell beats SLR by 6

By Jane Navarro

THERE was nobody to fear after Sta. Lucia big man Marlou Aguilar was benched by an injury, so Shell frolicked in the final quarter.

The Turbochargers smashed the paint and shot confidently from the perimeter to subdue the Realtors, 69-75, last night in the Unas Manila 19th Philippine Cup at the Philsports arena.

Tony dela Cruz typified the Turbochargers' aggressiveness as he came up with 24 points while shooting 10-of-17 from the field.

"We had a lot of shooting drills during practice and I believe it paid off," said Shell coach Leo Austria, who notched his first back-to-back victories since taking over the team last midseason.

The Turbochargers improved to 2-1, their best start since the 2001 All-Filipino Cup, while sending the Realtors to their third straight setback in as many outings.

In the second game, Red Bull got its first win of the season by handing Pembrook its first loss, 67-61.

Jeff Bagtas came off the bench and scored 20 points while Steven Villamorin added a season-high 14 for the Bombers, who tied Shell at 1-2. Pembrook dropped to 2-1 in a tie with San Miguel and Coca-Cola, behind front-running Talk 'N Text (3-0).

The 6-foot-7 Aguilar was taken out of the game early in the fourth period due to a hunting right shoulder, which got aggravated after it was accidentally hit by Billy Mamaril in one of the rebound plays.

With Aguilar out, Rich Alvarez and Mamaril teamlked efforts to work and pummeled Dennis Espino and Wilmer Ong in the shaded lane.

Alvarez finished with 12 points and 18 rebounds while Mamaril had 18 points, eight rebounds and three assists.

Ronnel Ildad, who celebrated his 22nd birthday yesterday, had 12 points.

The scores:

Final Game

SHELL 84—Dela Cruz 24, Yadd 12, Nonoy 11, Mamaril 10, Ramos 7, Obligado 6, Bajo 5, Cruz 5, Ilo, Mesa 3, Jaguar 2, Jumawan 2.

STA. LUCIA 75—Espinosa 15, Cipres 10, Mendoza 10, Alfaro 7, Sandoval, Dimaano 6, Dadia 5, Dela Cruz, Ocampo 2, Gonzales 2.

Quarters: 16-07, 35-30, 51-52, 84-75

RED BULL 100—Bagtas 20, Villamorin 14, Ong 13, Bagtas 10, Valenzona 9, Pascua 8, Mendoza 7, Dominguez, Alvarez 5, Lopez 5, Ordonez 4.

PEMBROOK 61—Hapunan 20, Lampe 12, Cuadro 9, Evangelista 6, Hrabak 5, Ilao 6, Gervas 3, Arnold 2, Abadilla 2, Flores 2, Ilao 2, Dimagiba.

Quarters: 21-12, 36-36, 53-48, 100-61.

Pat backs Miriam's Senate bill on one-day menstruation leave

LABOR Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas yesterday said she would support the bill proposed by Sen. Miriam Santiago seeking to allow female employees to take a month-ly one-day menstruation leave.

Sto. Tomas said she was glad a legislator had thought of it in the

had hoped for and lacks many others she herself was a young employee.

The labor chief said that only Congress has the power to enact such a measure which would mean a benefit government employees.

Private sector workers are able to bargain for such leave under their

collective bargaining agreements.

Santiago has filed Senate Bill 2687 which seeks to grant a day's leave each month for all female employees suffering from "pre-menstrual or menstrual trauma." It would also allow employees who report for work despite suffering the syndrome to be

remunerated the equivalent of 10 percent of their daily rate.

Asked if she saw any opposition from the men, Sto. Tomas said the men should be thankful that they don't have to go through menstruation.

But Cinco Lagunzad, the execu-

tive director of the National Wages and Productivity Commission, told reporters the proposal has to be studied as it might be unfair to the majority of the women workers.

"Majority of workers in the garments and semi-conductors [sectors] are women and if all of them would be allowed to take an additional day off because of menstruation, it could affect business operations," Lagunzad said.

Any new policy imposed on business must be acceptable to both sides—management and workers, he said. MARIA ROSARIO

FIRST

PRIMUS INTER PARES

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AMOR EQUALS

400 youths to join 'sex camp' in Subic

By Blandina S. Rivera

FIVE-DAY camp young Filipinos will probably be convening in June.

The Philippines is hosting this weekend a sexual and reproductive health camp for adolescents and young adults at the Subic Bay Freeport in Olongapo.

Some 400 youths, 15 of them from the Asia-Pacific region, have registered for the four-day camp that opens on Oct. 17 and ends on Oct. 22 in the Subic Bay Gateway.

Tomas Osias, the executive director of the Commission on Population, said the growing number of young people as a proportion of the world population has compelled governments and the private sector to provide initiatives to educate them on responsible sexual behavior.

As a press briefing yesterday, Osias noted that many young adults and adolescents remain ignorant about some important aspects of sexual behavior even as they start engaging in sex earlier than previous generations.

"This condition puts them at risk, considering that both males and females are becoming sexual conscious much earlier and get off marriage to a later age," Osias said.

"The studies from region to city reveal alarming rates that expose them to reproductive health problems such as sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. Those who experience reproductive health problems tend to do not seek medical attention," he said.

The camp will cover extensive discussions on reproductive health, sexuality and other issues confronting adolescents and young adults. Participants' ages range from 14 to 21.

Of the 15 foreign participants, two are from Afghanistan, one each from China, India, Guam, Myanmar, Thailand, and two each from Laos, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Nepal.

Of the world's six billion population, one billion are aged 15 to 24, the biggest-ever generation of young adults in the world.

In the Philippines, the youth comprise 20.1 million, or 26 percent of the total population of 76 million. This number will double in 35 years.

"The government recognizes the fact that adolescent problems is not confined to the Philippines and is taking action to address the issues of concern to the youth of this country," Osias said.

The fee is P6,200 for each participant, but those who make two participants can get one free slot, a number of international donors are sponsoring some participants.

Corrections

IN THE Oct. 13 issue, the editorial on page A14 incorrectly cited "In Manila City, public land in the City Hall complex was donated to the Roman Catholic Church, which built ... The College Company donated the whole Manila Circle, where the church and the City Hall complex stand."

The editorial also misstated the name of the church in the Manila Circle. It should be the Archdiocesan Shrine of the Divine Mercy. The National Shrine of the Divine Mercy is located in Marikina, Rubrum

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of the facts known to media to Letters Page editor "Philippine Daily Inquirer, 700 Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Ayala Avenue Extension, Makati City, 1200" or fax them to 897-2078. Please include your full name, address and contact telephone number.

Complaints about bias in news or opinion articles may be sent to Chief Editorial Writer Letty Jimenez-Magsanoc at the same address and fax number as above. Please include your full name, address and contact telephone number.

Typhoon 'Siony' increases strength

By Nestor Burgonio

TYPHOON Siony yesterday increased its strength as it was about to enter the Philippine area of responsibility, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Although the typhoon was still too far to affect any part of the country, Pagasa said it could intensify in the next 12 to 24 hours.

Based on satellite and radar data, Typhoon Siony's center was located at 1,360 kilometers east northeast of Cbe Bicol region at 10 a.m. yesterday, moving 20 km/h northwestward at 35 kph and packing winds of 140 kph near the center.

With a maximum of up to 170 kph, Typhoon Siony is expected to be 1,140 kilometers east of central Luzon this morning. It could enter the area of responsibility tomorrow morning and 700 kilometers east northeast of northern Luzon on Monday morning.

A POWERFUL WOMAN IS FLYING TO INQUIRER

Doubles partners collide in semis

TOP SEED Johnny Arcilla drubbed Clement Mantua, 6-2, 6-1, yesterday to earn a seat in the semifinals of the first Eastview Mini's Open Singles Tennis Championship at the Makati Sports Club.

Arcilla's expected victory sent him up against long-time doubles partner and fifth-seed Adolfo Mendez, who scored a 6-2, 6-2 win over Yannick Gitta.

Arcilla predicted a tough encounter.

"Adolfo knows my game. He's been my doubles partner many times. I will have to find ways to beat him," said the 24-year old Arcilla, who lost to Alcalde in the quarterfinals of the SPEX Open last June.

"But I think that I'm in top shape and hopefully I can make it to the finals and win this tournament," added Arcilla, who won six of his eight tournaments this year.

In other matches, second seed Joseph Marcelino continued his, 6 Jason Lagorio, 6-1, 3-2, while third seed Roberto Raul Jr. survived seventh seed Elbert Amaro, 6-2, 7-5. (21, to also ease semifinal berths in this event offering P100,000 to the champion and P15,000 to the runner-up).

ARCILLA drops only three games in advance.

Taguig cagers stop Batangas 29ers, gain NBC North final

TURBASIO Taguig held off Batangas in the homestretch to win, 69-64, and earn a shot at Spring Cooking Oil tucked Laguna Spring for the NBC (National Basketball Conference) North division title Thursday at the C.P Tiaga Memorial gym.

Taguig posted a 77-74 win over Laguna in the playoff round, but the 29ers rallied to cut the deficit to 61-60, with 30 seconds left.

However, they proved to be the first big stand of the 29ers of Mobile Shoes Tito Reyes, Rep. Dante Gonzalez and businessman Bernie Monsanto as Taguig's pressure defense forced Batangas to commit turnovers.

Mayor Freddie Tiaga's Taguig cagers will meet the Laguna squad of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Gov. Teresita "Gingging" Lazaro at 6 p.m. today at the start of their best-of-three series at the PILI Complex in Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

Laguna, which recently finished third in the league tournament in Bataan, is locked in the North division finals of the season-ender sponsored by Fisherman, Spring Cooking Oil, PCSO, Dalpinic Liars, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Cebu Pacific, the Philippines Supreme, Mayor Hernandez, Team Asia, Accel and Kraken.

"The boys really wanted to win," said Taguig coach Danny Gonzales. "We'll give Laguna a good fight."

The North and South champs will clash in the national finals. Mike Jarjoso and Dionisio are currently dispersing the South plum.

Top scorers

MOBILE SHOES 27 (Ilo 10, Pablo 7) Ilo Ilo 9, Romano 6, Ilano 7, Dave Magsanoc 5, Arnel 4, Rogers 4.

MARIKINA 26 (Ilo 23, Ilo, Ilo, Manuel 12, Ilano 9, Ramos 7, Ramos 6, Rodriguez 5, Ramos, Ramos 2, Arnel 2.

Quarters 23-17, 23-17, 7-14, 19-18.

Walk, just walk

SPECTATOR

A NOTE from the school read: "Quite caring lessons, are like the gardening hollerges, sayers Mendoza!"

"But was a teacher of a reader to say grave lover about gardening and walnap on Tuesday Feb 1 [2]."

Well, I've been doing some gardening for some time already. But just very recently, the "other half" and I had added a dimension to this marvelously beautiful hobby: harnessing sweetie to make the garden grow robust—and self-health benefits-inclusive.

The reasons: that help make our backyard garden healthy are of the African variety; they are called the "African Leaders." I found of many uses as to do of fruit a while back in a pit.

"They will for your best friend in making your garden the most beautiful ever in your neighborhood," he said.

A fan of the "African Crusader" a Point.

For month days area many of our neighbors have received bundles of fruit's mineral. Most of "half" compared their total count, would have benefited the thousand fruit. But then, using our organic efforts mankind What' nerves minus the chemicals) go for people both our close and dear to us makes us so happy and fulfilled already.

The best part of it is, we deserve more time tending to the garden (after all, it's the fruits we would eat health fruits from it from time to time).

And, yes, before we assert our gardening (thanks—educating the rest) around the planet, coming swings, swooning, etc.—we walk in the neighborhood 30 minutes. That's our way of saying the weather is good for gardening is, indeed, an exercise.

An exercise without a warm-up could be risky. It not Saturdays to health. And, but you cannot hold out, a 30-minute walk, a day endures I heard stories, or may have illness for that matter, to skyscraper.

If you don't believe that, change your shoes!

Ah, the ways of the world.

We live in phases, indeed. Yesterday, you were talking about accidents or something like the Jean Boots stuff. Today, you are into badminton, she can spent that years our PBA players indulges in to outlaw their agility. Tomorrow, who knows.

Well, as the late Beatle George Harrison sang it, "Tomorrow Never Knows."

I got hooked to carpentry once; still love it. The best summer ever outside golf.

So, back to gardening—back because I used to do it when I was a kid growing up in the country. I don't even know until when it will last. Nobody really knows when one's going to end what one has started.

Ah, the ways of the world.

Like George W. Bush. Will he still be president of America after Nov. 2?

Or, PETE Phil he was his present and make GMA a paper doll in the end?

Nobody ever thought Hitchcock would be acquitted in the Rodeo Arena shooting.

Ah, the ways of the world.

Not even Bobby Fischer, a chess-helped in the greatest chess player of all time, could absolutely be sure that the sapping blood had more value to the arms of the world. Otherwise, he wouldn't be languishing in a jail in Asian food he been one. A victim of his own genius.

Gardening, plus walking. To me, they are the simplest version a man can ever turn to in these times, unless there is some land deal I don't know about.

OR, never mind if you don't do gardening. You might not have the guts and don't understandable. The city's too swamped now, really.

But, please, walk. It's the only response that exercise available anywhere in the world. You can even do it with your daughter or wife. Or, better yet, for yourself. Those privacy. Mikes, kids, they can kill you with those prim legs alone.

You walk, you remember with subjects. Hey, there, Mendoza, my dear. There all around you, just on the ways smiling, smile back at the smiling.

Walk, or you stagnate and breed "death-incapacitors" in your system. Yes, don't walk, you could die not "among the dance."

While you is death, so, so, so

Mendoza: No dollar accounts

MENDOZA: I don't live on my salary. I have substantial holdings due to other businesses.

By Clarissa S. Batino

ALTHOUGH a consultancy/military officials, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza, a former chief of the Philippine National Police, yesterday denied that he had a dollar stash in the United States.

Mendoza said he had no knowledge that the US government was investigating him or his family. "I still formally ask the US authorities to issue a clarification on the issue. This is unfair to me who are being implicated," he said.

In military-related firm Robles, a retired commodore, had military-related clients Calabaza-based officials with military background were being investigated by US authorities for graft.

Mendoza said that one of his deputies had spoken with Robles and that the latter had cleared his name.

"The others who [a Robles' description are Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, former Secretary Angelo Reyes and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales. All are cast as Mendoza, are good friends of the Philippine Military Academy.

Mendoza said he was willing to issue a special power of attorney to an authorized body that could check whether he had a dollar deposit in the United States. "If they find one," he said, "it's theirs."

He said he cut his ties with the military in 1991: "I don't have military connections anymore."

Mendoza said he had "substantial" holdings derived "from legal sources of income."

"I don't live on my salary from the government. I have substantial [assets] because I have other businesses," he said. But he refused to elaborate beyond reassuring that his businesses were "legal."

He also said there could be a demolition job aimed at former military officials in the Cabinet.

Mendoza, who started his career with the now defunct Constabulary, was named PNP chief in 2001.

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• Ana Marie Domingo - 1st Place in 1998
• Esmeralde Tandingan - 2nd Place in 1999
• Franklin Barbaran - 2nd Place in 2000
• Arlene LaTorre - 4th Place in 2002
Arellano's tenure that served illustrious careers in the field of nursing:
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REYES: his hunky pantay

Palace firmly behind Reyes, rejects recall

From page A1

to protest rallies against Government Service Insurance System general manager Winston Garcia.

"We have expressed the view of the President that nobody is above the law but we will not make any unofficial lands out of anybody or try to satisfy the propaganda needs of others," Bunye said.

He said the President is not even asking for an explanation from Reyes, who helped topple Presidents Joseph Estrada and to, until his tenure as President during the Edsa 2 uprising.

"This is being done by the secretary and he has been explaining his side to the media and I believe the explanations of Secretary Reyes are sufficient at least for purposes of answering the allegations," Bunye said when asked if Reyes had resigned. He also said there was no need for Reyes to take a leave from his post.

"I don't think that's called for given the circumstances of the investigations which I could see unfounded so far," Bunye said.

Smear campaign

Reyes himself was in a fighting mood as he vowed to continue to perform his job. He said his critics won't succeed in stopping him from running after big-time drug lords and kidnapping syndicates.

"This smear campaign only strengthens my resolve in doing my job well. I have no intentions of leaving and on those going home who, unfortunately are the obvious beneficiaries of the latest tirades against me," Reyes said.

He expressed optimism that members of the Commission on Appointments would not dignify the smear campaign against him, saying he believes in the impartiality and objectivity of the country's legislators.

"I just hope that our legislators would keep an open mind and not fall victim to the black propaganda being peddled by my detractors," Reyes said.

Senate Minority Leader Francis Pangilinan and other lawmakers had called on the President to withdraw her appointment of Reyes after questions were raised on his assets.

Benefit of doubt

But one member of the commission, Sen. Francis Pangilinan, said Reyes should be given the benefit of doubt. He said he did not support calls for Reyes' appointment papers to be withdrawn pending a satisfactory explanation of the latter's assets.

"We should look at the data on Reyes and give him the opportunity to clarify matters," Pangilinan said in an interview.

He said it was important to allow Reyes to defend himself given that the general in his line of work may have stepped on the toes of some people who might try to get back at him.

Minority Leader Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., on the other hand, said that President Arroyo should act on charges against her appointees, including Reyes.

"She is the chief law enforcer of the government," Pimentel said in a separate interview. The "very least" that the President could do now is ask appointees facing charges to go on leave or withdraw their appointments, the senator said.

'Spare my family'

Reyes appealed to his detractors to spare his family from the negative publicity. He said his wife, Teresita, took control of their family restaurant business only last year.

"The restaurants in question—Manna Gio in Cebu City and Lola Inda in Bohol—are owned by my wife's family. She took control of management only last year so that is the reason why it was only in that year that it was reflected in my statements of assets," he added.

"I declared my assets as legally mandated. They are now on record for public scrutiny. It is just unfortunate that certain quarters have opted to resort, give negative implications and sensationalize reports about my assets," he added.

In his Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net worth, Reyes reported an increase in his cash deposits from P75,000 in 2002 to P4.1 million last year. He also listed in his statement two restaurants and a P5.8 million house at the AFP Officers' Village in Fort Bonifacio.

Joint account with mother

Reyes, a former AFP chief of staff and defense secretary, had denied any hanky-panky.

Reyes explained that the P4 million increase in his bank deposits came as result of his decision to remove his mother's account into a joint bank account given the fact she is already 94 years old. He reported that the increase in his net worth was brought about by the P6 million improvements on his house at the AFP Officer's Village in Fort Bonifacio.

His properties also include houses in San Juan and Pantabangan with current fair market value of P50 million and P20 million, respectively. Both houses were inherited and declared according to its acquisition costs, not the market value.

Reyes also owns two other properties at the Officer's Village with a current fair market value of P5 million each.

Loan to build house

In his 2003 statement, he declared total assets of P18.7 million, but he also declared a loan of P4.5 million, amounting to P1.5 million and personal loan from relatives and friends of P821,699.

He said he took out the P4 million loan to finance the building of his new house. With a report from Cynthia D. Rodrigueza and Armand Rocero

₱138M worth of shabu seized at Manila port

By Jerome Aning

CUSTOMS authorities yesterday seized 69 kilograms of high-grade shabu worth ₱138 million from an undeclared container van inside the Manila International Container Port.

The drug cache (methamphetamine hydrochloride) was found in three boxes consigned to E Pass Trading. The firm turned out to be non-existent.

The shipment arrived on Aug. 30 on board the vessel "Mol Grace" from Thailand.

On Wednesday, Street of Customs Deputy Commissioner Ray Allen ordered the van opened and inspected. A customs agent took samples of the white substance found inside the van, which was also filled with rice, clothes and shoes.

The samples were confirmed to be shabu by the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency on Thursday evening.

BOC Commissioner Guillermo Javier has ordered the seizure of the entire shipment.

Senior Supt. Orlando Mallillin of PDEA said a tip from an informant prompted authorities to place the container under surveillance.

X-ray and other tests confirmed the presence of the boxes containing illegal drugs, he said. With AP report

YAP'S PLEA

Farmers told: Harvest rice crop, please

By Christine O. Gapasan

AGRICULTURE Secretary Arthur Yap has appealed to the "sense of patriotism and selfless service" of the rice traders and farmers in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog in the latter's threat not to harvest their rice crop unless traders agree to increase the farm-gate price of palay.

Yap has asked Gregorio Yao, the administrator of the National Food Authority, to arrange a dialogue between the traders and the farmers and help them to reach a middle ground that would allow the farmers to earn a decent profit and traders to keep the market price of rice within the reach of ordinary Filipinos.

The farmers are asking the traders to raise the farm-gate price of palay (unmilled rice) from ₱9 to ₱12.50 a kilo.

Otherwise, the farmers, grouped under the Alyansa ng Magbubukid sa Gitnang Luzon and the Ugnayan Timog Katagalugan, threaten to stop harvesting the rice crop starting on Monday, in the middle of the harvest season in what is known as the country's rice belt.

Yap urged the contending parties to "reach a speedy and equitable resolution" to the dispute so as not to jeopardize the country's food security.

"Since we are all targeting rice self-sufficiency in 2005 and 94 percent self-sufficiency this year, we should do all we can to eliminate the obstacles to increasing rice production," he said.

He asked the farmers to put off their planned farm strike as it could trigger a supply gap, necessitating more rice importation which would further depress the rice-farming sector.

He told the traders that he was doing all he can to build a stronger and more efficient supply chain and had been putting in place the necessary infrastructure to make it easier and faster for farm produce to reach final consumers and customers.

He the traders must also do their share by working for the sustainability of rice production and assuring the uninterrupted supply of the commodity to consumers at affordable prices, the agriculture secretary said.

Yap said he has now made it easier for traders to deliver farm products from the north to Metro Manila and Southern Tagalog through the Project Haul Lane, which exempts agricultural deliveries from the truck ban and number coding on selected Metro Manila streets.

Gordon bats for expanded UN body

SEN. RICHARD J. Gordon has called for the expansion of membership in the United Nations Security Council to achieve a balance in decision-making on global security concerns.

Speaking before the UN general assembly in New York recently, Gordon stressed the need for radical reforms in the world's most powerful body tasked with the responsibility of preserving international peace and security.

In a press statement, Gordon reiterated the Philippine government's position that the Security Council should be guided by the principle of collective security established under the UN charter.

"A reform of the Security Council is both important and ripe because of the emergence of new and non-traditional threats to international peace and security," Gordon told the UN assembly.

He also urged the overhauling of the UN's social and economic councils and granting of additional powers to the UN's Secretary General.

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Malacañang scoffs at US think tank's disparaging comments against GMA

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, October 16, 2004
(Mass Needs to Facilitate Time)

1st Reading: Eph 1:15-23
Gospel: Lk 12:39-53

Jesus said to his disciples, "I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before people, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But the one who denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God.

"Now will he receive for the one who strikes the Son of Man, but those will be no pardon for the one who blasphemes the Holy Spirit.

"When you are brought before the synagogues, governors and rulers, don't worry about how you will defend yourself or what to say. For the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you have to say."

Commentary:

(The Holy Spirit is "the Spirit of Truth" (Jn 14:17; 15:26; 16:13). He can against the Holy Spirit is the sin against the truth. It is to call white black and black white. Here nothing stands: nothing has any value any more. There is no forgiveness, Jesus said, for the sin against the Holy Spirit. This comes as a shock, because we rightly see that nothing is beyond the mercy of God. The blasphemer can ruin God's call, but we may. We have turned the opposite right around, and that, in a way, is like not using the earth to the other direction, another, in turn, is like turning back all the many truths do. It is like using its life to a different universe. The true life is then there (see Lam).

(The Apostles have had the courage to say things after we could avoid them, pleasant if we didn't have carefully. Speaking about "worshipping the Father in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23), Maurice Zolliart said, "What is truth? The right to ask a child: Why Bird? God never calls us to a heaven from itself, I wouldn't like to call and be lied to."

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

REMEDIAL LAW (CIVIL PROCEDURE)—Contents of petition for review—A petition for review should only cover questions of law. Questions of fact are not reviewable. The exceptions apply only in the presence of extremely meritorious circumstances. As held in the Ramos, et al. vs Pepsi-Cola Bottling Co. (25 Phil. Sup. 1 (1963)), (a) when the conclusion is a finding grounded entirely on speculations, surmises and conjectures; (b) when the inference made is manifestly mistaken, absurd or impossible; (c) where there is grave abuse of discretion; (d) where the judgment is based on a misapprehension of facts; (e) when the findings of fact of the respondent and the appellate court are conflicting; (f) where the appellate court manifestly overlooked relevant facts which would have justified a different conclusion; (g) when the findings of fact are conclusions without citation of specific evidence on which they are based; (h) when the facts set forth in the petition as well as in the petitioner's main and reply briefs are not disputed by the respondent; and (i) when the findings of fact are premised on the supposed absence of evidence and contradicted by the evidence on record. None exists in this case. The same applies to the issue of the waiver raised in the petition for review. The petitioners state that the presence of delaying the court with factual issues in defiance of well-settled rule, in the face of having them reviewed, is unacceptable. Zobel was entitled. [Tolentino Coalgan, First Division, Villanueva vs Court of Appeals, G.R. No. 140299]

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MANILA, acknowledging for the first time that ties with the US-led administration have frayed following the Philippines' withdrawal of its token contingent in Iraq, Malacañang yesterday scoffed at a Washington think tank's disparaging view of President Macapagal-Arroyo whom it called "the weakest leader in the region."

Peter Brookes of Japan to Burma said the Heritage Foundation's analysis was "obviously biased" as it came from an institution allied with President George W. Bush and his Republican Party.

"This group is identified with conservative party [Republican] and we are talkers they are conservatives and we can see the bias," Bunye said upon reading.

In a commentary that appeared on "The Asian Wall Street Journal" issue of Oct. 7, Heritage senior policy analyst Dana R. Dillon called Ms. Arroyo an "equal opportunity weakling" and unnecessarily also assailed Vasher appointment.

"On question after question, the two things politicos in particular and her erstwhile allies are routinely excoriate. At this point, she must be considered the weakest leader in the region," said Dillon, a former military officer and Pentagon official specializing in Southeast Asian political and military affairs.

Bunye said he was aware that Heritage Foundation was closely linked to Bush who made a career out of bashing Ms. Arroyo.

As to the claim of Philippine-US relations, Bunye said he believed temporary disagreements will be clarified.

"Our relationship is stronger than many people believe. Our relationship has been described as a maturing one. We will continue to work with the US in many areas," he said.

Bunye did not answer when asked how the President viewed the prospect of a second Bush term.

In his analysis, Dillon accused the President of allowing threats from Iraq terrorists and regional bullies like China to influence his policies, thus working against the interests of friends and allies which provide the Philippines with diplomatic and financial aid.

"The fact... accepted nearly $1.00 million worth of military development and food aid from the United States since the Sept. 11 attacks, at the same time working against American interests is a source of shame," he said.

He said the President's "wanton desire to remember" encouraged a greater act of terrorism in Iraq and eventually forced her to impose a ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to Iraq.

He also criticized Ms. Arroyo for "intruding in China's regional affairs" by signing an agreement to jointly explore for oil and gas in disputed waters in the South China Sea.

The pact with China "almost certainly will embolden the aggressive intentions of other Association of Southeast Asian Nations] countries to compromise their claims on the South China Sea," he said.

Bunye defended the President's leadership abilities, noting how "one of the G8 most prominent magazines, Forbes, featured President Arroyo on its cover and described her as one of the strongest women leaders and ranked her as the 52nd most powerful."

He said the President's decision to save Filipino truck drivers Angelo de la Cruz from his Iraqi kidnappers was based on national economic considerations, especially that of the 1.5 million Filipinos working in the Middle East.

"This is something the President does not regret and she does not apologize for the decision. That demonstrated the leadership President has by taking the risk for Filipinos," Bunye said.

Bunye also said that the agreement to jointly explore the disputed Spratly's with China was "consistent with the declaration of conduct of the parties in the South China Sea."

An official of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FFCCCI) also defended Ms. Arroyo.

"She acted with commendable President but it should not be interpreted as a weakness," said FFCCCI executive vice president Francis Chua.

Meloxicam continues to be a treatment option for arthritis

Rofecoxib, a commonly prescribed anti-arthritis drug was recently withdrawn from the market. The reason: there was a study showing that the drug causes increased risk of heart attack and stroke.

Not long after, there were concerns from physicians and patients that other anti-arthritis medications might also cause the same problem.

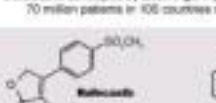
But people with arthritis who are taking meloxicam can have a sigh of relief.

Meloxicam, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for treating pain and swelling caused by arthritis, continues to be a treatment option for many patients. It's chemical structure is different from Cooibs, the class of drugs where rofecoxib belongs.

Studies of more than 100,000 patients taking meloxicam and traditional painkillers showed no evidence to suggest that meloxicam is associated with increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

These findings offer reassurance to meloxicam's commendable overall safety profile in the cardiovascular system. In light of recent news, however, arthritis patients are advised to discuss with their physicians the treatment options in their arthritis therapy.

Meloxicam, developed by Boehringer Ingelheim, has been used by more than 70 million patients in 100 countries since its first introduction in 1996.



Meloxicam has a chemical structure different from Rofecoxib.

A Public Service Announcement by Boehringer Ingelheim

10-man police contingent off to Haiti

By C. V. Espares

THE PHILIPPINES will send a 10-man humanitarian contingent to Haiti to join the United Nations peacekeeping mission there.

The team will be composed of three Philippine National Police officers, including a chief inspector and three non-officers, according to Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, police spokesperson.

The team, headed by Supt. Lucio Catalo, is scheduled to leave on Oct. 25.

Bataoil said the team will assist the UN forces in maintaining peace and order in Haiti for one year.

The team members will each receive a daily subsistence and allowance allowance of $100 on top of their monthly salary from the PNP.

Haiti has been ruled by domestic violence following the forced resignation of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Last Sept. 30, around 20,000 pro-Aristide supporters staged a violent rally that left three police officers dead.

The country is headed on an interim basis by United Nations-backed Gerard Latortue, a Florida-based UN development official.

NSAs decry POC cold shoulder

But Dayrit says late lobbying for SEAG slots could compromise RP position

By Mari Anthony Reyes

SEVERAL national sports associations yesterday accused Philippine Olympic Committee president Cesar Dayrit of snubbing them during the recent Southeast Asian Games Federation council meeting in Manila.

Shortly after leaving their meeting with equestrian president Jose Cojuangco, the NSAs claimed they had been bypassed in the two-day caucus which finalized the events and sport disciplines to be included in the 2005 SEA Games here.

"We did this in an ad hoc basis in the 3rd SEAF Federation council meeting last March, only to be disallowed to participate in the final and most important meeting[that would]" protested one NSA official who refused to be named.

Dayrit explained he had already announced his decision during the recent general assembly to leave out the NSAs in the Oct. 11-12 meet at the Sofitel Hotel. He said nobody had objected.

Dayrit said he had learned certain NSAs could make last-minute lobbying for their respective sports which "could compromise" the position of the host country. Dayrit is also the SEAG Federation vice-president.

"In other countries, when they hold SEAG federation meetings, local NSAs are not included," Dayrit told the boxmen. "I only allowed them to join in last March to give them a chance to take part."

At least 24 NSAs openly supporting Cojuangco met at the residence of the former Tiu Lac congressman, who is contesting Dayrit for the POC presidency.

Three more NSAs—football, archery, gymnastics—attended the regular caucus for the first time, but then have yet to pledge their allegiance to Cojuangco.

Sources said the three NSAs had spoken during the meeting regarding their thoughts on the coming POC elections, although they didn't readily commit their votes.

DAYRIT Cautious

Gallego leads 9-ball Open title hopefuls

SUBIC/ZAMBALES' Raoul Gallego leads title hopefuls in the knockout phase of the Mobilio Philippine 9-Ball Open on Oct. 20-29 at the Centro Filipino Amphitheater.

Returned after the WNT/Owl Championship, the tournament featuring 36 qualifiers will use the winner's break, race-to-9 format in the first three rounds. The quarterfinals and semifinals will be race-to-11 and the finals race-to-17.

Gallego dropped only two racks during the qualifying rounds. His feat ended possible opponent in undefeated Noemi Romero.

Other big guns in the field are third-seed Ozzie Ortaliz, sixth-seed Medel Mianda, 11th-seed Gandy Billo and 12th-seed Antonio Jining.

At stake in the tournament, organized by Active Sports, is a total of P1.14 million with the winner pocketing P500,000.

Mini-round winners will be guaranteed at least P5,000. Marlon Hernandez Contributor

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PNP general with Jaguar retiring early

By Christine V. Esguerra

THE POLICE general is retiring two weeks early but he says it isn't because of allegations that he is a keeping a Jaguar car that belonged to suspected drug lord.

He made it clear that only the Jaguar had been studied his "personnel records."

"I had long decided to retire earlier so I could rest," Director Edgardo Abadilla, one of the Philippine National Police's most controversial generals, told the Inquirer yesterday. "It's not in any way related to the controversy."

"What's next? an airplane?" Abadilla, 56, retorted, denying connection to the alleged drug lord Jaime Jaguar II. Type: luxury sedan—worth at least P6 million—and the yacht which the police confiscated last year from alleged drug lord Antonio Sy.

The allegations coincided with an investigation into a corruption scandal battering the tainted Bureau. The scandal centered on accusations that former military transgender Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia had illegally amassed wealth, including assets in banks and real estate in the United States.

Highly-publicized conflicts

Abadilla, who was previously involved in highly publicized conflicts with human rights activists and opposition Sen. Pemble Lacson over bugging devices and illegal drugs, said he would file his retirement two weeks before he reached the mandatory retirement age of 56 on Nov. 30.

But he quickly pointed out that his decision to retire a bit early was not the result of the recent controversy to hound him.

He said that Philippine Drug Enforcement Chief Edgar Aglipay, Data head of the police navy's illegal drugs task force, had personally asked him to take custody of the Jaguar car but complexity at the time in favor of the (Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

Behind the current position as director for investigation and detective management, Abadilla said it would not be ethical for him to transfer the Jaguar since he was still part of the "investigation team."

"What I did was to keep it in a storage facility in Pasig," he said. "There's so much to the allegations that I packed it in my speedboat to Camp Crame so as to keep it in Pasig. I never touched it for a single second."

Abadilla said he had already submitted to the Internal Affairs Service, the PNP's anti-graft body, an affidavit detailing the circumstances that led to the safekeeping of the luxury vehicle.

He also denied that the yacht confiscated from the Carter station laboratory supposedly owned by Sy was in his "safekeeping."

Awaiting to finally put the issue to rest, Aglipay on Tuesday turned custody of the Jaguar over to the courts.

Aglipay also ordered the 2nd to investigate allegations that Abadilla was using police resources to guard those cars supposedly owned by Sy.

Warning

"I am sorry about using the 2nd to answer your questions," he told us on Thursday. "If you have claims that he's using the car as victims in your newspapers, let the IAS investigate it."

Aglipay also issued a "last warning" to other PNP officials who might be pursuing his own graft body an effective denial of the circumstances that led to the safekeeping of the luxury vehicle.

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Rosario

US attacks Falluja at start of Ramadan

BAGHDAD—US warplanes bombed targets in Iraq's rebel-held city of Falluja on Friday, marking a violent start to the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

"The initial spate of airstrikes after midnight appears to be over," the US military said. US residents, soldiers and Iraqi hosts stopped any unsafely operations as said senator Falluja on Thursday night to disrupt planned attacks by insurgents, it said.

"This operation puts the enabling forces in Falluja on notice," a statement said, using the military's term for Iraqi guerrillas and foreign militants fighting US and forces and Iraqi US-backed interim government.

Washington and Baghdad have vowed to retake insurgent-held territory amid crisis abroad of national with the Iraqi line in January.

There was no immediate word on casualties in the overnight raids, which the military said were aimed at six dwellings but in Iraq, Associate Editor Alex Mendis al-Gaspard.

Zarqawi's group said it was behind most suicide bombings that killed five people, three of them Americans, on the heart of Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone on Thursday.

Hours after the blasts, US warplanes and helicopters launched fierce air strikes on Falluja, but a Pentagon spokesperson said she was not aware that this was the prelude to a major offensive against the bastion of Sunni insurgency.

"We are continuing operations," she said. "They are apparently hitting targets of opportunity." The interim government has told the people of Falluja to surrender Zarqawi and other foreign militants said to be holed up in the city of 300,000 in an ultimatum.

Ramadan, observed by Iraq's majority Sunnis from Friday, will end for majority Shi'ites on Saturday.

Coordinated suicide bombings unveiled havoc in Baghdad at the start of Ramadan last year, with at least 40 people killed in attacks on the International Committee of the Red Cross headquarters and three police stations in Baghdad.

The military said the Falluja raids at 2.30 a.m. hit "command and control units" used by senior Zarqawi leaders to store weapons and plan attacks, adding that an airstrike near Thursday had destroyed many vehicles Zarqawi targets.

Falluja residents have scoffed at such statements in the past, saying they have no knowledge of Zarqawi or his group and terming the Americans of bombing civilians.

The Green Zone blasts at a restaurant and a cafe popular with US troops and civilians were the first suicide bombings inside what is supposed to be the safest place in Iraq.

The country's interim government quickly moved to outlaw back.

"People were screaming. I was on the floor," said Mohammed Ali Alawi al-Obeidi, 23, owner of the nearby Ali's Restaurant, who was at the cafe. "People were screaming, crying to get out," he said. No night hand bandaged.

In the raids, an troops' medic blamed four built cafe a former period station, the area was thinner with glass, tainted metal. About [illegible] Photos of black were lying up to 15 meters away. Reuters

Bush, Kerry set sights on swing states

DES MOINES, Iowa—Democratic challenger John Kerry fired a blistering new attack at President George W. Bush late Thursday over his failure to win terrorist mastermind Osama bin Laden as the candidates set their sights on key battleground states less than three weeks before his election.

Kerry criticized a remark by Bush in Wednesday's final presidential debate in which the president said he had "not cared a lot" about bin Laden.

"He couldn't explain to America, who when we had Osama bin Laden cornered in the mountains of Tora Bora, he outsourced that job to Afghan warlords and sent them up and [bin] Laden got away," Kerry said in an evening rally in the midwestern state of Iowa.

Meanwhile, fresh improved confidence voters will shower him on Nov. 2 as a person ready to sign an executive and determined to defend the country.

"Now it's a point to the finish," Bush told reporters in a rare appearance aboard his Air Force One presidential plane, clinging to momentum Republican Sen. John McCain. "My spirits are high. I'm enthusiastic about my chances." Kerry all but echoed Bush's final words in the course of three hours. He attacked on strategic. With national polls showing them deadlocked, the race shifted to a handful of up-for-grabs states that will decide the Nov. 2 election.

Earlier in Nevada, the Democratic senator gave a speech to a powerful anti-gun lobby as the senior citizens' lobby, the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), which claims some 36 million members nationwide.

"We need a fresh start in this country of ours," Kerry said. "I believe that in my gut. And that will fight for the great middle class and those struggling to join it." The Democrat opened a 10-day blitz of seven up-for-grabs states—Iowa, Nevada, Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Florida and Minnesota—that may decide who gets the 270 electoral college votes needed to win the White House. AFP

New Cambodia king vows to stay out of politics

PHNOM PENH—Cambodia's new monarch King Norodom Sihamoni said in his first message to his kingdom Friday that he would stay out of politics, as he asked for guidance and understanding while he learns his new role.

King Sihamoni, 51, was handed his monarchy on Thursday by Cambodia's throne council, a week after his ailing and reconciliation former king Norodom Sihanouk, announced his abdication. Both leaders are currently in Beijing.

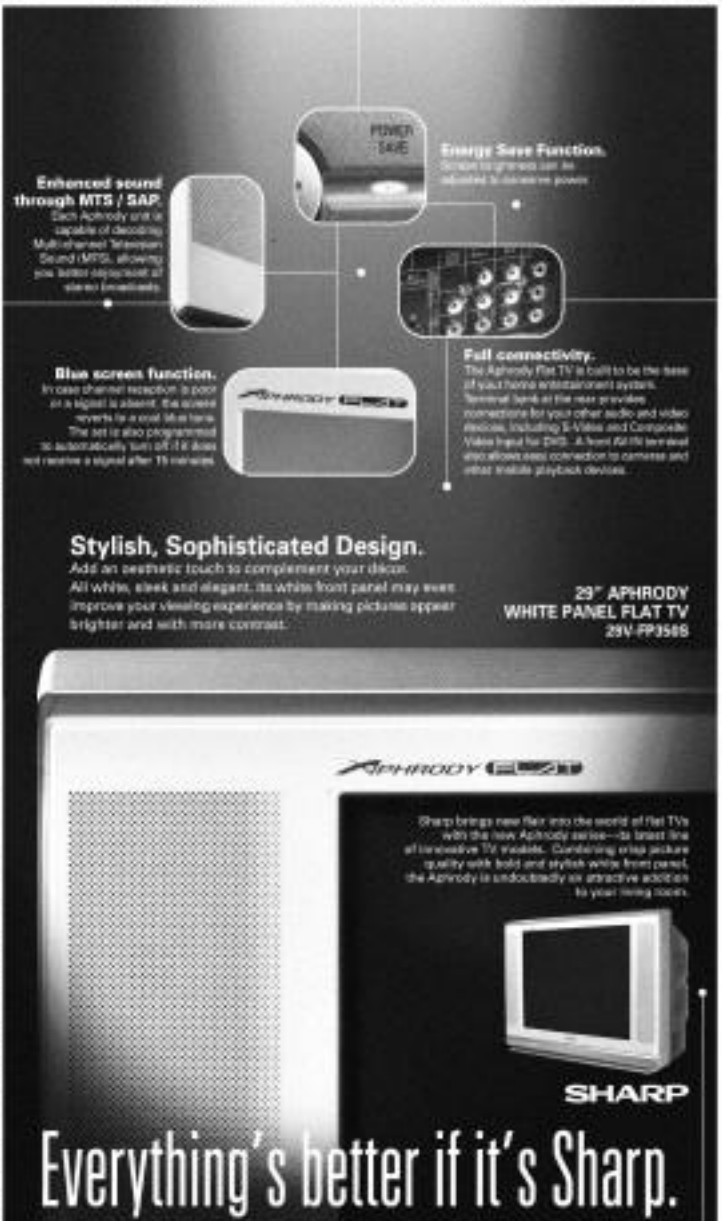
The new monarch, a former ballet dancer and cultural diplomat who has spent most of his life outside Cambodia, pledged to stay out of his kingdom's murky political world while following in father's example.

"I will try my best to follow the model of my father who he took the throne for the second time in 1993 and fully respected the constitution, which states that the king reigns but does not rule," he wrote in a statement.

"Moreover I will not interfere with the work of the legislature, executive and judicial — and will serve only as educator, diplomatic, social and humanitarian arena." While king, Sihanouk had been a champion of the press, handing out much of the accusations to the powers in the dominant Southeast Asian nation.

He was also renowned for taking powerful Prime Minister Hun Sen and other top politicians with his sharp criticism of their work.

"I would like to declare publicly that I will be neutral with politicians and all parties," Sihanouk also wrote, praising Sihanouk for being "the father of independence, peace, national reconciliation and national reconstruction." He promised to "always be honest with the people" and confessed he "worried and feared that I cannot fulfill the great job well because I lack experience." AFP



Prince Harry cheated in Eton exam, teacher says

READING, England—A former teacher who claims she was unfairly dismissed from Eton College after being ordered to help Prince Harry cheat in an exam tried to prove her allegation to a tribunal on Thursday by using a secret tape recording she had made while talking to him.

The former teacher, Sarah Forsyth, 38, has told the tribunal that she wrote nearly all the text of an art project that Prince Harry submitted to pass an important exam in 2002.

Her attorney, Robin Allen, quoted Harry as saying on the tape: "It was a long time but I did about a sentence of it."

Forsyth claims that Prince Harry, the son of Prince Charles and the late Princess Diana, was ordering to the amount of work that he had done on the course materials submitted to the exam board.

However, Eton later released its own transcript of the tape, with Prince Harry something slightly different: "I was, like, a sentence in it."

The gaffe that Prince Harry recorded on the course work helped him win admission to his next school, Sandhurst, where he is now training as a military officer.

Nigel Giffin, a lawyer for Eton, called Forsyth's conduct "pretty grubby."

Paddy Harverson, a spokesperson for Prince Charles, told the hearing: "This is incredibly serious for Harry. After Forsyth's lawyers have given the court a brief extract from the tape and played three consecutive questions upon it."

The tape ... contains hardly audible half-sentences, and it appears to have been edited. It is also difficult to tell what Harry is saying and what he is referring to, due to the poor quality of the recording and the distorted extract of the tape. The last sentence there did not exist. The allegations have been independently investigated and proven unfounded, "Harverson said.

Thursday's hearing was held to prepare for next year's tribunal on Forsyth's alleged unfair dismissal.

Forsyth claims she was fired on June 15, 2003 on a teacher at Eton, one of Britain's most prestigious private elementary and secondary schools, after being harassed by Ian Basher, then head of Eton's art department. She said Basher ordered her to carry out some of the work on Prince Harry's art projects.

She said she recently taped her conversation with the prince in her classroom, knowing that she was about to be sacked by dismissed from her job. "It was very difficult to talk to Prince Harry because he was always closely guarded by bodyguards," she said.

Allen, Forsyth's lawyer, said she got Basher's order after she refused instructed she would be given a one-year contract in the future, not a permanent teaching position.

"She was not happy about the order to help Prince Harry," Allen said. "She feared that if she complained about it at the time she would be ostracized."

Previous complaints Forsyth had made about Basher's conduct were ignored, Allen said.

"She said she felt it was used to all and probably contributed to churning, and she felt she had been asked to do it because of Prince Harry's position at the time," Allen said. AP

PRINCE Harry in the Drawing Schoolwhile runs with his work at art he created while at Eton College June 7, 2003. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Serbs own Muslim deaths

BANJA LUKA, Bosnia—Serbs in the Republika Srpska, the Serb-dominated part of Bosnia, acknowledged on Thursday that their forces killed more than 7,000 Muslims in Srebrenica in 1995 in what is seen as Europe's worst atrocity since World War II. It was the first time the Bosnian Serb government came to terms with the killings, but it was unclear whether it would take any responsibility for the crimes. For example, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) puts the figure at no more than 7,000 at most. Reuters

Karzai leads in count

KABUL—The first results in Afghanistan's historic presidential election Thursday and President Hamid Karzai was the leader according to early and incomplete returns. The counting began in the capital, Kabul, and in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, but it was not clear when the results would be announced. Karzai, who is backed by the United States, is running against 14 other candidates. AFP

US deficit $413B

WASHINGTON—U.S. President George W. Bush's administration announced Thursday a record $413 billion budget deficit of 18 months before, fueling up a pre-election battle over the economy. The government's deficit provides Democratic challenger John Kerry with ammunition in a heavy fight over economic policy ahead of the November 2 presidential vote. Government spending for the year ended September 30 outgrew revenues by $413 billion dollars, swamping the previous record of $412 billion dollars set in 2003. Its overall, the deficit has increased by 6.5 percent from 2003 to $2 billion dollars—equal to 3.6 percent of gross domestic product, or total economic output. AFP

Quake rocks Taiwan, Japan

TAIPEI—A powerful earthquake measuring 7.3 on the Richter Scale rocked Taiwan on Friday, causing people in the coastal high-rise buildings and sending aftershocks. There were no immediate reports of serious injuries or damage from the quake, which was located offshore some 100 km off Taiwan's northeastern coast. It struck near 10 km below sea level. The location, which struck at 0600 GMT, was also felt in Japan's southern Okinawa island where there was also no immediate reports of serious injuries or damage. AFP

Arwind Santos leads Magnolia PBL charge

MAGNOLIA returns to the cage limelight when the San Miguel Corp. franchise unleash its rookies as the Dairy Ice Cream Wizards in the Philippine Basketball League (PBL) Open Championship that kicks off the league's 23rd season on Oct. 23.

The Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream Wizards will be composed of the core of the Far Eastern University Tamaraws, led by 2004 UAAP Most Valuable Player Arwind Santos.

"We are very proud to carry a brand so prestigious as Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream," said coach Ric Rascal, praising back to the Magnolia squad's winning tradition in the 1980s when the PBL was known as the Philippine Amateur Basketball League (PABL).

Magnolia Dairy Ice Cream's PBL comeback signals SMC's return to the ice cream business, with plans to build a modern ice cream plant as an integrated park in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

"The challenge for the team now is also to ensure that we consistently deliver games reflecting the high quality of the brand that we carry," coach Rascal added.

SMC's PBL franchise was revived last year, immediately bearing fruit in a runner-up finish at the 49th Missi of Water Polos in the 2003 Sri PBL Unity Cup and, subsequently, a championship trophy in the conference's second edition late June.

The Magnolia Wizards are: Gone Catli (6-2), Antonio Garcia (6-2), Jose Sison (6-1), James Reyes (6-4), Joel Co (6-0), Ryan Joseph Rizada (6-2), Dennis Miranda (6-3), Wacene Thunker (5-7), Mark Isip (6-4), Neil Baizono (6-4), Jonel Mocha (6-2), Den Nabor (6-4), Arthur Chan (6-2), Arwind Santos (6-4), Gerard Anes (6-4) and Francis Ramellano (6-3).

Magnolia's PBL board representative to Asia City team manager is Petra Marcia. Rascal's assistants are Manolo Gonzalito, Michael Oliver, Sebastian de Vera and Dario de Rosas.

SANTOS: From Tamaraw to Wizard

Summer's Eve meet Nov. 6-7

WOMEN'S swimmers are invited to the 2nd Whisper Summer's Eve Badminton Cup from Nov. 6 to 7 at the Rizal Philippines Badminton Club.

Tournament fee is P600 per player inclusive of tournament shirts, court fees, gamefees, shuttlecocks for the games, meals and entrance to the awards night. The briefing is scheduled on Oct. 23-24.

Registration forms are available at Rizal Philippines Badminton Club in Ghost Boulevard, Rizal Shop in Megamall, World Kalakal Inc. at Batiquinan and at Robi Mobile in Megamall.

Registration forms can also be downloaded via www.pbsi.net and www.bloomingfields.net. Last day of registration/payment will be on Oct. 29. Payments are accepted at Rizal Philippines Badminton Club, Rizal Shop, World Kalakal Inc. and Robi Mobile.

For inquiries, contact Nel Bidaya at 0917-4209892 or Bernard Abelada 0917-8105730 or at 6175614 and 8176321.

P.5-M cash pot at stake in Manila Marathon

HALF a million in cash prizes, including P500,000 in the men's and women's 42.2 runs, are up for grabs in the 2nd Manila Marathon slated Nov. 28 at the Rizal Park.

Organizers said the biggest ever foot race in the country will also kick off the capital city's preparations for hosting the Southeast Asian Games next year.

The Rizal Memorial Sports Complex and the Quirino Grandstand will be the venue of the both of the games and activities of the SEAG, which the country is hosting for the third time.

Manila Sports Council chief Arnold "Nol" Atienza, son of Mayor Lito Atienza, said prizes will also be raffled off during the marathon, SK, 5K, Manila 5K, Celebrity 5K and Differently-abled 2.5-K races. A separate 3.5-K fun run for youngsters 11 years and under has also been included.

A total of P220,000 have been set aside for the winners in the SK and manila 5K and P120,000 in both the 5K and Celebrity 5K, as well as in the race for the differently-abled. The races are principally organized by the city government in line with Mayor Atienza's Bukayo-ang Manila program.

The 42.2km race, which will be flagged off at 4 a.m. at Roxas Boulevard, Between the Rizal Monument and Quirino Grandstand, will pass through Roxas, Quiapo, Binondo, Intramuros, Sta. Mesa, Sta. Ana, Pasay, San Andres, Singalong, Malate before heading back to the Rizal Park.

Philippine Sports Commission chair Ricardo Suhara, Philippine Olympic Committee president Cojuangco and officials from various national sports associations will be on hand when Mayor Atienza fires off the field of about 40,000.

Runners from Manila's 897 barangays as well as teams from the Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, City College of Manila, AMBET, the city's 130 public elementary and secondary schools, the design and the military and police are among the early entries.

Manila Ladies Cup golf set at WW

THE MANILA Ladies Cup tees off Nov. 10 at Wack Wack's men course with the country's top amateurs and a host of international players expected to vie for top honors in various divisions.

Hosted by the Manila Lady Golfers Foundation Inc., the three-in-one Asian outing (senior men—bowelling, duatrion for women and children—is spread over three days.

The ladies' and men's team competitions is duration Nov. 15.

Play continues on Nov. 16 and 17 for the ladies' individual and ladies' team competitions using the Medalist modified Stableford point system. The scores for three days will determine the winners.

Ladies' play will be classified into the following classes: championship, A, B, C, and seniors for 50 years old and above. The ladies' team event will be a six-to-play, four-to-count format.

Proceeds of the tournament, sponsored by Globe Platinum, Burlgasen, Splash Manufacturing, Nordia Trading Co. Inc., Ninge Bowmen, San Miguel Corp., Solitaire Telecom Corp. and Unilever Phils., will benefit Epifer, a foundation for cancer-stricken children and the Manila-ang Ospitalong Filipino.

"We are proud to be at the forefront of this worthwhile project again," said Betty Tuason, the foundation's chair.

For inquiries, call the MLGF at (632) 687-9246, or Butch Brandel and Joel at Wack Wack (632) 7248661, (632) 7246058.

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OPINION

Text or post your feedback/opinion: 2207 (Globe) or 333 (Smart)

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Fatal addiction

EDITORIALS

TO GET a vivid picture of life in these parts, imagine the multimillion-peso cash deposits in the names of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, his wife and their three sons, their fleet of vehicles, as well as property in the United States, including a condominium unit in New York and a house in Ohio. Then imagine a couple straining to maneuver a pushcart through the traffic, their bodies gaunt, their clothing tattered, the pushcart, actually their home, loaded with a passel of grimy children and what amount to their worldly goods. Think of the shopping expeditions of Garcia's wife (apparently a regular, money-splattered exercise, else what are the file drawers for?), then consider the painstakingly methodical sweep that scavengers perform on the daily haul of garbage to be able to eat.

The act of smuggling is supremely easy to do, the ways of the new rich being so tawdry despite through their many machinations, and the ways of the impoverished being a sad, sullen part of the daily panorama. The polarity is nothing new, in fact ever present, a veritable part of the warp and woof of the Philippine social fabric—but now much sharper, more cutting.

The revelations coming fast and furious on the lifestyles of the rich in the Armed Forces are made more infuriating in light of official findings on the hunger situation, a great number of Filipino households, to speak nothing of the alarming state of the economy. The "gifts" and "gratitude money" coming Garcia's way in the course of his prehearing his former functions as AFP comptroller, as so candidly disclosed by his wife Clarita to US customs authorities, give the lie to the Arroyo's administration's declared stance against corruption, and make of it a shallow, even laughable pretension. And the continuing horse opera of the congressional inquiry on corruption in the military, specifically the unexplained wealth of the two-star general who can't even be compelled to show up, hardly promises a resolution.

No, it does not seem like the problems will see resolution in the near future. The "feral addiction" to money that ex-military rebel Brig. Gen. Rolex Balweg talked about while disclosing the allegedly widespread corruption in the military appears as tenacious as ever, if one is to go by Garcia's case. It's probably true what they say—that some people just can't have enough of the good stuff once it's there. The addiction is complete and overwhelming. According to the conventional wisdom governing this addiction, there's no sense in turning off the tap when the pipelines burst on overflowing. Two, three houses? How trifling. Get a condominium at the Trump Park Avenue. Forty bank accounts? That's only in the Philippines. A stash of $180,000? Only part of what Clarito Garcia said was cash received "for travel and expenses from businesses that are awarded contracts for military hardware."

But no solo trip

BUT for all that (including the unwaveringly lush attempt of the Garcia boys to smuggle a huge amount of dollars into the United States in 10 suitcases stuffed in their shoes and their jacket pockets, as though they had never heard of money transfers), observers are native to the ways of addiction would point out that this general could not have been acting alone. It could not have been a solo trip.

In the course of entitlement, it is only logical for the wife receiver of "gratitude money" to include others on the take, whether superior or subordinate, the better to make the "process" more efficient, preclude discovery, and ensure silence when silence counts.

In which case, Garcia may be of significant value. While recovering from his suddenly serious ailments and sleepless nights, he may be persuaded to talk about the apparent systemic malady in the AFP, the bribery of which his case is said to underlie only the tip. (Imagine how far-reaching it goes. Again, imagining would not be too difficult to do, certain musicians to such elite enclaves as Greenhills Gardens and Ayala Alabang being such dead giveaways.)

Cleansing the AFP

SEPARATE OPINION

Raissa A. Cruz

THE REVELATIONS of the incredible wealth of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia, as recently whistleblown by his own wife and later by coeds to the US consulate authorities, has again focused public attention on the corruption, real or imagined, in the armed forces of the Philippines.

There were reports of irregularities in the disposition of its retirement funds, the alleged corruptions in the acquisition of military equipment, the mansions and luxury vehicles of some of the generals, and even the closing of Malacañang to counter its former field commanders with Mother, which said the idea beyond laughter. But all these suspicions did not go beyond the usual investigations after the grandstanding of the legislature.

The military had earlier been regarded as a more exclusive agency of the government, but it acquired a new image under martial law as the loyal protector of Ferdinand Marcos. The effect was devastating. Instead of begin to navigate the congressional, where they learned to distinguish the politicians' supposed acting like schools. The wrong ones (Gloria's cadres) wielded a deadly arrow against the enemies of the new regime.

Marcos saw to it that the soldiers were well rewarded—indeed, spoiled—for they turned the government's enemies into their enemies. Even after the downfall of the dictatorship, the armed Forces have retained their power and prestige. The succeeding administrations have seen to this. The civilian presidents seem to be so terrified of a coup d'etat from the armed soldiers that they think it best to keep them content. The only way to do this is to appease them so civilian officers for what they may have neither qualifications nor objectives.

Edsa-era Cabinet is now the "little president" in the executive secretary Leandro Mendoza is the secretary of transportation and communications. Angelo Reyes quit as defense secretary but has remained as supervisor local government. Many retired generals now occupy subordinate positions in the Cabinet where they may be groping to unfamiliar terrain. Teresa Lozada, who recently finished his stint in the AFP will be back as "telecommunications czar," an office he has created for purposes—with his monthly basic salary of only P10,281.

The latest report, however, is that they will not start retiring him, after all. Talk of indecisiveness...and from the top defender of the nation. What if war is on a way?

President Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be anxious to have no part in the preservation of the general malice leaving it to the chief of staff to do whatever he feels should be done. This is a wonderful opportunity for the commander in chief to assert her authority if only to show her direct involvement in maintaining the integrity of the AFP. Strangely however, she would rather steer clear of the delicate and sensitive responsibility. A younger female president would have seized the opportunity to prove her mettle. Isa Pinedang Aquino si na Pinay Marcos. Then key leading the Republic into a democratic path.

However the outcome of the case against Garcia, I hope it will lead to the wider investigation of the troubles in the AFP that triggered the failed Oakwood uprising last year. The Feliciano Commission which investigated that aborted coup supported that a solution of, but be made to study and correct the mutineers' grievances which were gross basic valid. But the President acted on their suggestions?

Besides Garcia, several other officers are under investigation. Some will be dismissed—they are grossly disproportionate to their salaries. Another general is charged with falsifying his land records to avoid his sometimes over-rich ago. There cases may be only the tip of the iceberg, and a more serious examination of the officialdom of the government is in order. Let's not shrink. Don't misbook this may have been covered up only even by responsible to gain of the powerful leanings of the AFP.

President Aquino was totally inactive when she rode this among Republic by obtaining the Aquino soldiers in the Armed Forces of the Philippines. All she needs is the most statesmanship to face up to the crooked generals and other military grabbers who have dishonored their now disreputable institution. She is, or should be, their constitutional commander in chief. She should have the will and the guts to act as such, or others there are serious secret reasons for her dormancy.

'Solo flight'?

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

TWO months ago, following the release of a paper signed by 21 Secretary of the Philippines economists, Secretary Encarnacion of the then development-minister was in the midst of a fiscal crisis. The have to raise it squarely, watching our savings, consumption and solvency is a matter not people," she said. So Filipino of sound mind and goodwill can disagree with her assessment.

Given the crisis, the government's resulting to recovery outlining the steps to overcome the crisis, measures unpopular, unpleasant. It will be examined very carefully by the country's creditors, for personal reasons, as well as to be used as regards to the government's own investment decisions. Thus, it is important that the roadmap, in the form of the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP), is credible and measurable. All stakeholders (for the government "Not knows where it is going and how it intends to get there, and if has the means to carry out its intentions, given the circumstances it is being.

That MTPDP was launched earlier this month, accompanied by President Arroyo's "cash or carrier together" remarks, and such presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye's assurance that it was going to be used as a bible by all Cabinet members and government officials.

But what was launched was not the full-type MTPDP itself, but a 13-page capsule of both its vision (Daniel Bernhi Burn—which presumably serves as the executive summary of the MTPDP—accompanied by a 163-slide power point presentation, was to meet an enthusiastic response. Under the hall, one was expected to be presented to the Cabinet on Oct. 5, its release has been held in abeyance, pending their comments, until Oct. 26. That can only mean, given the "launch," that (a) the Cabinet's comments will be considered in the finalization of the MTPDP—accompanied by a 163-slide power point presentation, was to meet an enthusiastic response. Under the hall, one was expected to be presented to the Cabinet on Oct. 5, its release has been held in abeyance, pending their comments, until Oct. 26. That can only mean, given the "launch," that (a) the Cabinet's comments will be considered in the finalization of the MTPDP, or (b) the full-text MTPDP was not really a full text and needed to be finalized to fit the comments of some—the gross economic pronouncements of some of the 25 Cabinet members, for example—or (c) the MTPDP was not really the full-text MTPDP, but only a preliminary draft, and the full-text MTPDP will be released after the Cabinet has had its say.

Whatever the case, the MTPDP is now being presented to the public, and it is the public's right to comment on it. Let me start with the macroeconomic framework, which is the basis for the projections in the MTPDP.

The framework is based on the assumption that the world economy will grow by 4.5 percent in 2004 and 4.4 percent in 2005. Domestically, it assumes that the economy will grow by 6.2 percent in 2004 and 6.5 percent in 2005. Inflation will be 4.5 percent in 2004 and 4.4 percent in 2005. The peso-dollar exchange rate will be P55 in 2004 and P54 in 2005. Interest rates will be 6.5 percent in 2004 and 6.4 percent in 2005. Exports will grow by 10 percent in 2004 and 11 percent in 2005. Imports will grow by 9.5 percent in 2004 and 10.5 percent in 2005. Investments will grow by 10.5 percent in 2004 and 11.5 percent in 2005. Consumption will grow by 5.5 percent in 2004 and 5.6 percent in 2005. Government expenditures will grow by 5.5 percent in 2004 and 5.6 percent in 2005.

Now, I am not an economist, but I have been around long enough to know that these assumptions are not cast in stone. Further, any economist worth his salt will tell you that these assumptions are subject to change, depending on what happens in the world economy and in the domestic economy. Thus, it is important that the MTPDP should have a "sensitivity analysis" that would show the impact on the economy of changes in the assumptions. For example, what would be the impact on the economy if the world economy grew by only 4 percent instead of 4.5 percent? What would be the impact if the peso-dollar exchange rate were P60 instead of P55? What would be the impact if interest rates were 7 percent instead of 6.5 percent? What would be the impact if exports grew by only 8 percent instead of 10 percent? What would be the impact if investments grew by only 9 percent instead of 10.5 percent? What would be the impact if consumption grew by only 5 percent instead of 5.5 percent? What would be the impact if government expenditures grew by only 5 percent instead of 5.5 percent? Without a sensitivity analysis, the MTPDP is not worth the paper it is printed on.

Now, let me go to the macroeconomic framework itself. The MTPDP projects that the economy will grow by 6.2 percent in 2004 and 6.5 percent in 2005. Let me start with 2004. The first quarter growth was 6.1 percent, the second quarter growth was 5.8 percent, and the third quarter growth was 5.9 percent. The average for the first three quarters is 5.9 percent. To achieve 6.2 percent for the year, the fourth quarter must grow by 7.1 percent. That is a tall order. Even if the fourth quarter grows by 6.5 percent, the year's growth will be only 6.1 percent. To achieve 6.2 percent

No substitute for GMA's personal appeal

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

While celebrating members of Congress have enjoyed their share of the Senate's legislatory in the repeat tax reform measures, it's better than the administration forges ahead them. They said that it would be best to extend focus on going after the 50 billionaires and 43,000 millionaires said to be among the country's most delinquent taxpayers. Those startling figures were reported by president by an official of the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry as per income losses hearing.

The problem with this approach is that it's too much. The 9/11 has made it uncommon to clarify that the figures on big-time tax evaders have not been validated, but merely the result of extrapolations which "may eventually be proven erroneous." This matter certainly ought to be looked into by the BIR, but in the meantime, Congress should not be in a hurry to pass the bill. Besides, it's unable to pass these tax measures. As pointed out by the economists, a demographic of even one percentage point means P96 billion more in revenues. Add to that the P70 billion under the bad propaganda value. I read the statement of Jaime Sanchez (senior relations officer Cora Galeone, stressing the urgency of passing one or two tax measures, asserting that "the credit rating agencies will not wait for us to act." In fact, already S and P people are arriving soon to assess our credit rating, she lamented. Has the government don't harm "a sense of urgency"? Isn't this obvious from the way it spend 48 to oppose graft the headlines? If the economy worsens, the debacle is now welcome to blame.

Since the ball is now in Congress, I wonder if President Macapagal-Arroyo would take real efforts to sit down with its members and appeal to them to pass these tax measures. I am sure that if she invited them to the Palace and appealed to their patriotism, they'll relent. This is a job that she cannot delegate to Finance Secretary Juanita Amatong and Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima.

* * *

Sen. Ralph Recto has said that the net exposure with the best chance of passing is the indexation of excise tax on alcohol and cigarettes—popularly known as the "sin tax"—which is now worth P14 billion. Its passage hinges on the cooperation of two Senate players: Eduardo Cojuangco, whose ban Miguel Coty leads in the beer industry, and Juan Ponce Enrile, chair of Treasury Tobacco, the biggest cigarette maker. Talk is that Cojuangco has already agreed to the tax raises and that he himself has supported to Ten tax in block. Is personally opposing that provision but not enough to block the measure. Enrile is unable to pass these tax measures. As pointed out by the economists, a demographic of even one percentage point means P96 billion more in revenues. Add to that the P70 billion under the bad propaganda value. I read the statement of Jaime Sanchez (senior relations officer Cora Galeone, stressing the urgency of passing one or two tax measures, asserting that "the credit rating agencies will not wait for us to act." In fact, already S and P people are arriving soon to assess our credit rating, she lamented. Has the government don't harm "a sense of urgency"? Isn't this obvious from the way it spend 48 to oppose graft the headlines? If the economy worsens, the debacle is now welcome to blame.

* * *

As soon as more BIR people are minted (nominee Carlito and Gino Rodriguez of the Board of Investments) will show the main industries of all centers, medical manufactures, industrial and other industries in the IT field. He assured that in view of rapidly changing technology in the information IT sectors in the United States, there's need to set for the enhanced criteria to these industries, and to demonstrate eliminated access to the tax policy-based incentives to these considered "sunset" industries.

* * *

Happily these concerns are being addressed. Carlito and Angelo assured that to ensure the quality of Filipino human resources for those in these, the Board of Investments has entered a partnership with the academe and industry to formulate courses focused on communication and computer schools in an international level.

* * *

I share the nation's shock over the acquittal of former Intendente man Antonio Buendicho, namely indicted for the kidnap-slay of publisher Jesus Malabanan of former Antique Gov. Evelio Javier in February 1986. Buendicho is one of the convicts who escaped from prison. His acquittal, almost 18 years after the 1986 murder, means that those who were responsible for the murder of Javier, whose reality he was zealously guarding when he was gunned down, helped trigger the peaceful uprising. Those involved in the murder were never identified, and the reason is that the problem is that our justice system is such that a man that had accused as alright could end up in the way that we just saw.

I also honor the resignation of former Justice Undersecretary and Dangerous Drugs Board executive director Jose Calida, reportedly over differences with his boss at the Dangerous Drugs Board, Justice Secretary Angelo de Reyes. I've followed Calida's prosecutorial merits especially with regard to the Garnered marijuana and their expansion "Reyes," former Sen. Gregorio Honasan. I found his views on the matter of prosecution of Dangerous Drugs cases courageous, and refreshing in a government dominated by woody thinkers. Government's loss is private practice's gain.

Throwbacks to the Middle Ages

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

(Throwbacks to the Middle Ages)

* * *

ISABEL Sandoz, a champion of women's rights and reproductive health in Cebu, as well as a founder of the Legal Alternatives for Women Inc. (LAW Inc.), read a statement during the public condemnation held by the Women's Initiative for Justice at Rolling Hills, Banilad, Mandaue City last Tuesday. The Women's Initiative for Justice counts various women's groups in Cebu—LAW Inc., Liberal Filipino Women against Violence, and many other organizations—among its members. It was founded in response to the heinous murder of lawyer Ariel Sto. Tomas, who was legal director of LAW Inc. and an outspoken advocate of the rights of women, children and all those who, in the famous words of President Magsaysay, having less in life, deserve more in law. The statement follows in full:

We, the women of Cebu, are shocked to learn knowing of the violent death of Atty. Aries Ilas Ana-Intagras... It was so sudden, and so unnecessary. We are angry that such an act can be done in broad daylight, before many eyewitnesses. We are scared with the thought that what happened to her could happen to any one of us. We weep with the loss.

Atty. Ana was one friend and colleague in our work to protect the rights of women and children. She was an advocate for peace and had been courageous and determined in her fight against the violence and senseless killing of humans brought by wars and war lords. We grieve when the fight gets tough, all those she did, while she juggled her multiple roles as mother, wife, career and daughter.

We mourn today the loss of Atty. Ariel, our sister, our friend and our colleague in our peace and justice and human rights advocacy. We are outraged that a woman who devoted her life to end violence against women is herself a victim to such violence.

* * *

We still condemn the gruesome killing of Atty. Aries. It was a treacherous and cowardly act to silence a courageous woman in her home with an inkling of the fear in her life. This is an affront to democracy, a way of life and an obstacle to the search of justice, which people like Atty. Aries are forcibly silenced.

We urge the police authorities and prosecutors office diligently pursue the conduct of investigation so that their professionalism and trustworthiness will be proclaimed here to answer the public of their safety.

We call on the government officials to come up with a comprehensive and peaceful program of action to end violence against women in our country. Atty. Aries's case just highlights the increasing criminality of our society.

With her death, we come to raise his story. As activists, we are in partnership with our multiple roles as wife, mother, career woman and activist working for gender justice.

We will go on being loving mothers to our children, equal partners to our husbands and dedicated professionals in our workplaces. Each one of us feels as scared into silence with her death, we have become more sensitive to our fight for the protection of women's rights.

We, say we are not sure that we know that there will be many more Arlenes if we will be intimidated by our fear. We will continue to empower women so that women are no longer victimized and marginalized in our society. We continue with our good work with us provide a safe and secure home for our children.

Atty. Aries has accomplished much in her 38 years in life for us, she is a symbol of the fight of women for a just and humane society. We grieve for society she has inspired us to go on. We are grateful with the thought that our courageous and dear friend is now in God's company.

Filipino religiosity

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Randy C. Herjoe

ITS quite interesting to observe the difference in the Christmas fervor of the Filipinos between the old and new devotees. In the early 16th century Fr. Martinez de Zuñiga was already complaining that we were not well instructed in the Christian doctrine. In 1886 Franciscan missionary Fr. Pedro Delgado also lamented the inability of Filipinos had no real understanding of their religion; they just memorized what they were told. Pilipino Herald, nine governor, 66 that our religious beliefs were confined to the observance of external practices but didn't make any deeper impression.

French traveler Jean Mallat observed that we were particularly superstitious with lots of devotion about ghosts, phantoms, monstrous creatures, amulets, talismans, charms, witches, wizards, naked forms, ghosts, spirit of the place and new frog ideas. There was even a room of a parish priest in Magalang, Pampanga who considered 37 murdered souls having been made to labor day and night without food being placed under a spell.

Early missionaries found that methods of government and religion beliefs were based on customs and traditions. Some traditions were perfectly in consonance with the principles of Christianity and were sung during work, play or celebrations and fiestas; even when they were childish, meaningless and the deeds of the gods had no basis in fact.

Many of the spirits known as anito and nonos, were, in important parts in the pre-Christian religion of the Filipinos. In 1595, Franciscan Fray Diego del Oliva found in the town of Lubo, about 200 miles northeast of Manila, anitos in images and figures. Some were covered with gold; others with brown silver and studded with diamonds and other precious stones, with one being said to be agreed with the Chinese there and the his touch to the chapter of noblemen, and the others and their 18,000 main land.

The people had an abundance of fine carabaos were his town their religious practices, as well as various kinds of dances consecrated by the natives of the islands, among them, old women who acted as priestesses.

Many newly converted natives were so fervent in their faith that they knelt all throughout the Mass and they would not let one Mass but at many as they could hear in a day. Their devotion combination they would fast, do the discipline (self-flagellation) and abstain from carnal intercourse, even with their wives. Of their own free will, they would fast for three days or a week, and throughout all of Lent. Some practice up nice and are only boiled rice during the Holy Days.

They would make their own "books of feasts" to book containing the prayers of the Office of Our Lady for the various days of the week, which they would write in their own characters and letters. Lives of the saints and that of Our Lady and other women saints were also written down and read frequently.

Processions and solemnities were also performed with zeal. Some alternated from passing salt to mute feast; others stopped hashing...a great penance and sacrifice for Filipinos who were known to have a sweet tooth for sugar. Some would vary for days to wear umbrellas, a practice that the priests tried to discourage as they did with self-flagellation so that they do not endanger their health. They would also get up to pray during Christmas midnight Mass, bringing candles and "give beheadings up to sacred prayer."

During Lent, they would arrange elaborate and show blood, carried heavy crosses and performed other mortifications. Others set up their homes as sepulcher where people would go and pray for penance and sacrifice. Some hung from crosses, others put on sackcloth on their backs, others drag weights from a halter as if they were beasts, which they considered themselves to be for having offended God.

Several mentioned were given for any moral decline later, chief among their the lack of priests. There were 40,000 to 50,000 faithful to a priest so that it was impossible for the parish priest to adequately attend to the needs of his congregation for religious instruction. The further away people lived from the town, the worse the situation became.

Many were true Christians in many ways, though tainted at birth. The situation improved somewhat when the Augustinian Recollects arrived more widespread since the earliest taught catechists. Still many students merely pursued the religious teachings but did not measure up understand what they studied.

In the 19th century there was a growth of left Catholicism. The most well-known of this was Apolinario de la Cruz's Cofradia de San Jose that caught his followers as pray, drink, aren't a bad thing at all. But on the number of its members grew, the authorities became alarmed and prohibited it from going on. The members banded and that resulted in a violent protest that led to the death of four Franciscans. Some of them, however, fled to Mount Banahaw, where they lived as hermits, a practice mentioned that Pedro Calungsod carried them as "the model of Calvary, the spring of Justice, Purgatory, etc."

There is a lesson to be learned across centuries about the Philippines as the only Catholic country in Asia, juxtaposed with its being one of the most corrupt as well. Makes you wonder, doesn't it, whether we really are practicing Catholics or just baptized?

(Sense and Sensibility is Philippine Church Historian John H. Schumacher, S.J.)

* * *

Comments to rcherjoe@yahoo.com

Miss Piggy

I HAVE always been fat. When I was born—my mama always tells her friends and mine—I looked more like a bulldog than a puppy. I weighed seven pounds and eight ounces, and Mama had to undergo an episiotomy because one of her twin boys where was on my way was too much.

Anyway I grew even bigger as the years passed by. Eating vegetables, eating those ones, never taken in our family by grandfather—Wenay, we finally called him—boiled veggies, as he always say.

Pork, beef, chicken, fish, name, shabam. Tab was seldom a fare on our family table.

I hated walking, as I was always sitting down, either watching "Batman Forever" or playing with my dolls.

When I entered preschool, I found myself in a new world. Mean kids would tease me and call me names. The one name that still stuck in my mind is "Miss Piggy." I'd go home crying to my Mama and ask her things like "why am I so fat?" and "why do they call me Miss Piggy?" Saying no what Piggy, Mama said explain that it was because I was fat. "You mean it? Am I fat? Fat like Sarah (My sister, but at 5 they should see me)?" I my Mama would tell me, adding, "Mahal ka kasi namin kaya ka lalo ay. (We love you that's why you're healthy)." Remember I came to accept that being fat is being healthy and being loved.

I soon really stopped crying over the teasings, and I started explaining to kids my age that I was fat because my Mama and Papa loved me so much, and that they were chubby because their parents don't love them. They then would end up crying!

When I was about to start my elementary years at St. Theresa's College, Quezon City, I had an accident. My mom spending summer in Baguio where I fell off a horse. I broke my left elbow and I had to undergo two major operations. I was only 6 years old then. I guess I suffered some trauma from the accident, because I started to have an obsession in myself. I was afraid of being people and of being alone and left behind. Then my parents decided—instead of growing me into canopy they enrolled me in swimming, piano and ballet lessons. This was how I found where my heart truly belongs.

I discovered I love dancing and it became my passion. I remember I was the biggest girl in my dance school, but my teachers, Mr. H and Mr. Hidlao, appreciated my talent. They complimented me on my dancing and they told my parents how graceful I was in dancing. Among the dances I excelled at the Maraleo Theater and in Sampaloc's Tandaang Tabluk. My piano teacher invited me to do recitals/solos at the Cathedral Hotel and Glangel in Pinas. I felt so proud of myself... how I am, a fat kid, but I can do things that kids can't do!

And inside of me the Good genes talent, I have my mama and my Papa to thank for. Mama's a singer and Papa's a composer of many songs. They have been my encouragement, my constant guide and my inspiration. I also have a family who accepted me and never let me feel neglected or discriminated. My grandparents, my aunts, my uncles and my cousins appreciate my uniqueness and made me feel special.

I am now 18 years old and will be turning 19 in November. This would be my last "teen" year. In my life's journey, I can say that I am truly contented. I have discovered other talents at least that's what my Papa says they are. I write poems, I choreograph and paint as hobbies; I sew, I paint, I design. I know I am fulfilled. The continuous support of my dreams and goals in life, but still there are others in my long list, and it is definitely long! I want to finish my course, Asian Studies, at the University of Santo Tomas, graduate with honors and make my parents proud of me, and be able to inspire and touch other people's lives.

You see, being fat is not a God's condition. You just have to accept your uniqueness and be able to discover your God-given talents. And as you go through it all, you need loving and supportive parents who would encourage you, guide you and make you realize how important you are in this world, and that you have your own purpose in life and can make a difference. Parents who would make you believe in yourself and wise as your stepfather because they know you can. And a wonderful family ready to swindler you because they love you and because they know that you are important.

Your size is nothing. It is not a reflection of the God-given talent people and those who wish to follow pain on this. You would break who, through thick and thin, value, understand, appreciate you as you are and love by you through everything. Above all, you need to believe in yourself and to God and remain wonderfully finished in Him. He is the one who bestowed with gifts and who constantly challenges you to make you a thing.

Dancing my passions, Bonita Gracious, "You are in this world to have all kinds as you can just stride or death." Growing this article, I faced my fear—the fear of being discriminated. Now I am sure I will experience another coaching, I'll give back a smile.

Ms. Geneviere Joyce R. Nepales, 18, is a third year Asian Studies student at the University of Santo Tomas. She's a Barista under studying's 2004 awards.

YOUNG BLOOD

Ma. Genevieve Joyce R. Nepales

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Submissions: contributions from the twenty-something and below—Ed.

THEY SAID

Formidable corruption

"I have come to the conclusion that neither the pen nor the sword can stop corruption in the United States."

—Former Army Gen. Tom George, whose controversial article in 1867 savaged graft and pushed him to resign months later

Necessary alternative

"Abolishing Congress is easy. Providing an alternative to provide the possibility of dictatorship while providing a solution to many of our systemic problems is the difficult part."

—Rep. Edcel Lagman

Divine silence

"In spiritual leaders, we condemn the sin, not the sinner. We don't expect people to celebrate."

—Quezon City Bishop Fernando Capalla regarding a High Court decision to bar Gov. Eduardo Rodigo the custody of government officials occupying his living quarters

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Apology not enough; Identify the brains

LEST in the apology offered by the Magdalo rebels are the names of the people who misled them into pulling off the coup. Nobody is talking about who masterminded the plot to overthrow the government.

The people Antonio Trillanes the Magdalo officers identify the personalities who aided and provided them financial assistance. This is the only way we can put closure to this sad episode. Isolating those soldiers who participated in the attempted coup is just half of the story. Those behind them and continue to remain in the shadows must be identified now, for the government and the people will never be safe as long as the top conspirators remain active free.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile is so wrong to say that a coup will not happen if there is good governance. Good governance is not a guarantee to prevent coup. No government is safe against a politically ambitious and powerful politician or against a military establishment with a messianic complex.

—CESAR R. DELEBEAU,
cesdelco@manila.com.ph

LETTERS

Gov't role in addressing ADHD

I'M a mother of an 11-year-old boy who was diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) when he was 7 years old. He has been kicked out of school twice already and, right now, he's on a one-on-one setup with a private school in Makati. Also, I'm a member of the ADHD Society of the Philippines.

In reference to the article of Rita Jimenez, Jared on ADHD children (PDI, 9/23/04), it's true that we, parents, are faced with difficulty in finding the right school for our children. You really have to talk to the school administrators about their behavior and make them understand ADHD. Considering those are Catholic schools, it only they could understand how parents feel every time they experience kids like what happened to my son.

I hope the government would do something about this matter, like proposing a bill that would make those schools accept children with ADHD. I believe that the awareness and setup in a regular school will help the children's development well also help in lessening the social skills.

—LEIZL VILLACIS,
M Mel Gomez St.,
Poblacion, Makati City

Correcting Migrante's misimpressions

WE wish to take exception to the letter ("OWWA omnibus policies unjust," PDI, 10/12/04) of Mirla Santiago, secretary general, Migrante International.

The demeanor and nonchalance of the OWWA omnibus policies obviously comes from the ignorance and wisdom behind the implementation of the OWWA code. For one, it clearly defines the programs and services that the member-overseas Filipino workers who are the regular contributors to the welfare fund. He seems remember that the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is a membership organization and, as such, from this members deserves the right to avail of its expanded programs and services.

Realistically speaking, any membership organization, the OWWA included, speaks of membership qualifications in order to put things in proper perspective. But we assure you that here in the OWWA, we cannot administer to both members and nonmembers. As the vanguard of both the sea-based and land-based Filipino migrant workers, we are mandated to look after the welfare of the member-OWWA, without compromising the excellence of nonmembers and the viability of the fund of the regular members. The DOF does not take anything away from OFWs.

To extend financial assistance to nonmembers is equivalent to encouraging Filipinos to work illegally abroad and avail themselves of the same privileges offered to the OWWA regular members. Such practice will definitely discourage certified members who religiously contribute to the fund.

Contrary to Santiago's belief, there is no discrimination in the repatriation of members and nonmembers since we adhere to one policy of serving the members and extending assistance to nonmembers.

To further enlighten Santiago on the issue, we suggest that she browse through the Frequently Asked Questions related to the omnibus policies at owwa.gov.ph.

—BARAQUEL O. ARQUE,
administrator,
Overseas Workers Welfare Administration,
OWWA Center, 7th Street cor.
Flagstaff St., Ermita City

Highest paid public official not GOCC exec

THERE has been so much agitation to trim down the salaries and allowances of the heads of government owned and controlled corporations. Reports indicate that most of them receive a monthly compensation each of more or less P800,000.

The situation is morally impermissible especially because most of these GOCC heads get much more than the President of the Philippines—that is, including her intelligence funds.

But the highest paid government official may not be one of the heads of these GOCCs. It is not even the head of the Bangko Sentral. It is the Philippine ambassador to an Asian country for receiving a monthly remuneration of less than $20,000, or more than P1 million.

I should have because we are the complainant in a case filed against the Philippine ambassador and six other Department of Foreign Affairs officials before the Ombudsman for graft, malversation of public funds and plunder/or salaries and allowances—in violation of law and the Constitution.

—NELSON D. LAVIÑA,
nlavina@yeon.com

Side effects of contraceptives?

HIV have been told over and over again by the government and other population institutions that contraceptive pills have no side effects. I think it's about time for the public to know what the real score is about this matter. Some doctors are saying that contraceptive pills do have side effects.

As a young couple living in a rural area, we are confused. We need to be sure what we are doing with our family is right. Are there any materials or data are concerned to refer to as to the truth about this matter? Would the good doctors and senator Juan Flavier please enlighten us on this one?

—CHRIS S. VILLANI,
Barrio Sabel,
San Fernando, Pampanga

Question of the Week

What should be done to the high-ranking AFP officials who are suspected of amassing millions of pesos in ill-gotten wealth?

Submit your answers (P1 per text) to Tuesday's **InqBox** poll, each score as "Inquirer Poll P1."

INQUIRER Visayas

Photographs, memories of liberation

By Roanne S. Lobo
Tacloban City

PHOTOGRAPHS showing the horrors of war, the destruction wrought by war, and a jubilant people who had just regained their freedom fill the rooms and hallways of an old house on Paterno Street, Tacloban City.

Visiting the two-story ancestral home of the Moreno family on that street will bring one back in time and space to the last days of the Japanese occupation in Leyte, the coming of the Allied liberation forces led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the reestablishment of the Commonwealth government under President Sergio Osmeña, and the declaration of Leyte as capital of the Philippines.

Among those on display is, of course, the famous Leyte landing photograph showing General MacArthur, President Osmeña, Gen. Carlos Romulo and others wading in Red Beach in Palo, Leyte on Oct. 20, 1944.

Several pictures are also about the battle of Leyte Gulf, the suicide attacks of the Japanese "kamikaze" planes on Allied Forces warships, and the role played by local guerrillas led by Col. Ruperto Kangleon in paving the way for the Leyte Gulf landings, among many other significant events.

The pictures on display at the Moreno ancestral home, however, are not original photographs but are only reproduction of old photographs, magazines and newspapers coming from different sources, including the United States War Department.

Incidentally, at least eight of the war correspondents that covered the liberation of Leyte had notched for weeks in that same old house of Mr. Alejandro Moreno.

Among them was William Dunn of Columbia Broadcasting who is shown in the famous Leyte landing photo carrying his typewriter as they waded in the shore," said Mrs. Moreno, a son of the doctor and a successful businessman. (he is now 75 years old.

JOY IS etched on the faces of Tacloban residents, some of them waving the Philippine, American and Chinese flags in liberation soldiers pass by. This photo is among the exhibit of nearly 300 photos at the Moreno ancestral home in Tacloban.

'I have returned'

Moreno was already old enough to remember the war and the liberation campaign—he was 15 years old then.

Among the images forever etched in Moreno's memory is the signing of leaflets. He recalled that in the morning of Oct. 20, 1944, during a lull in the continued bombings since Dec. 08, an American airplane dropped leaflets containing an announcement from MacArthur: "People of the Philippines, I have returned."

"The last word when we read that announcement," he said.

Another image that stuck in his mind was the arrival in the city of the first batch of American soldiers.

"We heard shouts telling people to come out into the streets. A few domestic fans; we saw some guerrillas walking ahead, followed by a couple of tanks in the middle and the American soldiers marching single file on both sides of the road."

"That was the first time the people saw many American soldiers. They came from Ojo (diversion of) Pampanga division that were young and their faces were reddish," he recalled.

Moreno also remembered that the American soldiers were surprised that the locals spoke their tongue. "Since the Filipinos did, they could talk in understandable English," he said.

He also recalled that at one time the famous composer and lyricist, Irving Berlin, who composed the popular song "White Christmas" visited Tacloban on his way to Tolosa to perform at the 8th Army Theater in that town.

Berlin also composed the song "God Bless America," Moreno said.

But when Berlin visited Tacloban, he overheard a group of schoolchildren at the Leyte High School, which, according to Moreno, included the young Imelda Romualdez, singing his song "God Bless America."

But a part of the lyrics was changed—instead of "God bless America," the words used were "God bless the Philippines." The

PHOTOGRAPHS BY R.S.L.

BEAT THE ODDS with Governance & Massive Advancements in Cooperatives

With 64,000 registered cooperatives in the Philippines, the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) continues to intensify its multi-faceted initiatives to unleash the immense potentials of this independent sector. As CDA headed to the significant challenges as early as January 2004, our milestones generated opportunities for our small business enterprises like cooperatives fostering economic stability, promoting employment, low-cost housing, financial services, education, environment, good governance, and many others and the services being rendered by the sector and CDA has always been for maximum service in making the votes.

Today, CDA celebrates in line with the celebration of the 7th Cooperative Summit, on October 14-16, 2004 at Bacolod City the achievements of its flagship program called Governance and Massive Advancements in Cooperatives dubbed as "**GMA sa Kooperatiba**".

GMA sa Kooperatiba is being implemented through inter-agency collaboration and collaboration with its development partner-agencies, namely, the Quedan & Rural Credit Guarantee Corporation (QUEDANCOR), National Livelihood Support Fund (NLSF), National Credit Council of the Department of Finance (NCC-DOF), and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) through massive mobilization for various financing needs of cooperatives including livelihood projects. The objective of the program is to institutionalize cooperative development programs that are geared towards effective and efficient governance and regulation of cooperatives, its high-impact and massive mutual assistance are: 1) **CDA-QUEDANCOR-LINGKOD PROGRAM**; 2) **CDA-NLSF-CDA-QUEDANCOR-DOF-BSP Tie Up**; 3) **CDA with Express Lane Registration of Primary Cooperatives**; and 4) **CDA Learning Network**.

CDA-QUEDANCOR-LINGKOD PROGRAM. This financing system has provided a total loan amount of 7.7 million pesos as credit assistance to cooperatives to provide viable package of financial assistance in terms of being capital for the production, marketing, processing and other related activities of the enterprises including micro-finance projects.

CDA-NCC-DOF-BSP Tie Up. The Memorandum Circular of Executive Order and the Performance Standard for Credit Cooperatives or COOP PASCO to regulate and supervise cooperatives and savings and credit services is now in place through the collaboration of CDA, Department of Finance through the National Credit Council (NCC-DOF) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

CDA Express Lane Registration of Primary Cooperatives. A new development based on performance and efficiency in the function of CDA as the sole supervisor of cooperatives, the Express Lane of CDA with speed registration of cooperatives, which takes only 2 hours to process and release the Certificate of Registration is part of shaping a new CDA. In its initial implementation, 21 cooperatives from different regions were registered. This express lane registration can be availed of on the CDA's Extension Offices.

CDA Learning Network. In pursuit of a well-developed and professionalized manpower within the Agency, CDA has established on a regular basis a learning network with its employees. This program includes: encouraging our qualified employees a scholarship on Masters Degree in Business Management under the joint cooperation of Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP). Grooming and Development Program with good orientation included the enhancement of our technological advancements. Statistical data, circulars, rulings and other information that you want to know about CDA and cooperatives can now be viewed at www.cda.gov.ph. We are confident that this can be our easiest reach here of our clientele as this information is expected to net major changes that will foster good improvements for cooperatives and for the Authority as we bring ourselves closer to you.

CDA-GTZ Study Tour. In line with its commitment to welcome Net Foundation, Inc. (NAFI) for taking part in outstanding small business entrepreneur such as cooperatives to have their entrepreneurial skills especially in marketing. 10 cooperatives from different regions participated in the exhibit and trade of their products during the launching of the NAFI Lakbayan Center last August 5, 2004 at SM Bacoor and SM Sucat Mall. The success of this venture made SMP look into the possibility of replicating it in other SM branches.

Interested parties can submit their Articles of Cooperation and other submissions to Cooperative Development Authority's Cooperative Project Development and Assistance Division (CPDAD) with tel nos. 374-8845 & 372-3835.

CDA Chairman Rodriguez: Come to inspect that CDA as Cooperative, with the cooperative movement at the forefront, can sustain our vision of a Strong Republic.

THE NATIONAL LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT FUND

congratulates the Cooperative Development Authority and participants to the

7th Cooperative Summit
October 14-16, Bacolod City

President
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO

ANTONIO T. ORTIZ
Exec. Dir. VENG. NLSF

GARY B. TEVES
President & CEO, Landbank
and Chairman, NLSF

The **NATIONAL LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT FUND** has various lending schemes to cooperatives, rural financial institutions, LGUs, NGOs and POs which serve as conduits in relending funds to the small farmers, overseas workers, youth and jobless urban poor.

In its 23 years of existence, NLSF has a proven track record among its stakeholders. At present, NLSF loan portfolio has supported 251 coops, RFIs, LGUs, NGOs and POs in the implementation of their credit assistance programs. Total credits of P979,580,000.00 have been released benefiting 93,603 borrowers.

Through the NLSF-CDA partnership, the Governance and Massive Advancement in Cooperative Development **(GMA sa Kooperatiba)**, all cooperatives are pre-qualified to become NLSF conduit partners. In support of this program, total loans of P548,840,000.00 have been released to cooperatives and coop banks.

Without any government subsidy, the agency has been able to increase its earnings thereby expanding its services. Aside from microfinance, NLSF offers a complete menu of services such as capacity-building, SME financing and community development services. It has generated average annual income of P104.67 Million while offering non-collateralized loans with pro-poor interest rates.

NLSF has fully capitalized the People's Credit Finance Corporation with its P1 Billion fund exposure.

Programs and Services

Microfinance

- **Livelihood Credit Assistance Program (LCAP)** – Credit program to agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) and farmer households.
- **Youth Entrepreneurship Financing/Facility Program (YEFP)** – credit facility for the credit requirements of graduates with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) and the National Youth Commission (NYC).
- **Special Tie Up (STUP)** – Financial assistance for other segments of the marginalized sector capacity in partnership with local government units (LGUs) and non-government partners.
- **NLSF-PCA-Associated Programs** – financial facilities and their requirements.
- **Livelihood Development Program for Overseas Filipino Workers for OFWs** and their beneficiaries.

SME Financing Program
In support of the Trade Export, Going Products, Going Manufacturing Plan – SME's Program.

Capability-Building Services

- The Community Business Development Center (CBDC) assists strengthen the capability of cooperatives, rural financial institutions and NGOs in accessing credit funds and efficiently managing them. CBDC facilities are also operating in Davao, Cotabato, Palawan, Cavite, Baguio, Cagayan and Zamboanga. These are run by the private sector and LGUs.
- Accelerating Capacities on Credit Extension Services Outreach to Agri-Agra Households – ACCESS – joint program with the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Credit Policy Council that seeks to establish village lending units (VLUs) run by rice and corn mechanization with the farmer beneficiaries.
- Agrarian Reform Community Development Project (ARCDP II) – implemented with the World Bank and the Department of Agrarian Reform in 30 agrarian reform communities in 7 provinces.
- Philippines-Australia Technical Support for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (the Facility) – partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and DAR aimed at the social preparation of ARBs.

Community Development Services
Medium-term financing for LGUs' basic development projects such as small-scale irrigation systems, construction of rural roads and education or health facilities.

For inquiries, please visit or call:
NLSF-CBDC, 2/F Landbank Plaza Building
LBP Headquarters Building, Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, Garden Avenue, Pasay City
Tel. Nos. 404-1000 to 07, 831-1000

Photographs, memories . . .

Photographs, A-17

school children used a way their teachers who taught them the song.

Montes claimed that Binhi had preserved and told them to sing the song to be compassionate. The musician also promised to compose another song exclusively for the Philippines. The song was called "Heroes from Iwo, Philippines."

Sixty years later, Montes could still sing the song which starts with "Heroes watch the Philippines, keep her safe from harm" and ends with the lines "Heroes watch the Philippines, and keep her heaven-bent, keep her forever free."

Binhi introduced this new song in Tokyo, over the US-owned Far-east radio station WVTE, also known then as the "Voice of Leyte." Unfortunately, when the war ended, so did the singing of the song, lamented Montes.

AN EMPTY cigarette pack and an empty ration can bearing the words "U.S. Army ration" and showing the signatures of Gen. Douglas MacArthur and the Philippine and American flags are among the war memorabilia on exhibit at the Montes ancestral home on Tacloban City. American airplanes in Leyte dropped these items in October 1944. ANGELA MARIE PEÑA TOLEDO-ALBERO

Nostalgia

Nostalgia could easily overcome the elderly who come to the Montes ancestral house today to view the photographs, like that of a group of American soldiers being welcomed by the people, of Allied soldiers struggling with the locals, and of the Independence Day parade in Tacloban in 1945.

The Americans and other Allied soldiers had stayed in Leyte until 1945 because the liberation campaign was still going on in other places like Mindoro, Manila and Lingayen.

There there are also pictures of a caroling American who was stunned through a path impossible to motor vehicles, of a group of Leyte guerrillas huddled before a table with a radio transceiver, and a group of American soldiers posing in the foot of a like-size monument of a Boy Scout, which already stood there long before the war.

Aside from the photos, also on display are maps or sketches of the many principal attacks of the Allied forces, one of the "I have returned" leaflets, as well as packages of some kiri cigarettes and cigarettes dropped by the American planes, and copies of the Free Philippine newspapers that circulated in Leyte during the liberation.

There are nearly 300 photographs and several war memorabilia on display at the Montes ancestral house, which is now popularly known as Red Alejandro. The house is at the back of the old residential building.

In that old house, photographs are displayed in one room of the first floor and two rooms on the second floor. Display boards with pictures also occupy the hallway on the second floor. Six pictures likewise hang in almost all of the walls on the second floor.

In some portions of the walls on the ground floor are old Montes family photographs.

Unlike the mostly photographs, which have been in their positions for several decades, the way pictures are exhibit were collected by Alex Montes just about a decade ago.

The search for photos

It was only when the golden anniversary of the Leyte Gulf landings was about to be celebrated in 1994 that Montes decided to collect memories of the Second World War.

He teamed with partners from an old magazine he had been keeping, which had a dozen war pictures shot in Leyte. Then a friend of his, Norberto Salinda, lent him 10 magazines with more pictures about the war in Leyte.

Montes was optimistic then that he could list his up to get at 200 photos for his exhibit.

He sought the help of another friend, Claudio Pilanca, who plugged over the radio Montes's announcement that he wanted to borrow old war photographs for his project. Some kindred host him nearly one-year photos with American soldiers and of an impacted event during that time.

Early in 1994, he had requests of their Information attache Brian Sisolak of the US Embassy in the Philippines to provide him with such photos it was known went back to Washington, others from the Pentagon or the US war Department.

A month later, Sisolak called him up, telling him the photos were already in the US Embassy in Manila. Montes went to the embassy and was able to copy about 60-to-80 photos. "They had many photos, but for the certain Philippine campaign. So, I just chose those concerning or taken in Leyte," Montes said.

He also went to the Australian Embassy and was able to copy about 10 pictures of Allied ships that took part in the liberation of Leyte. He also went to the Japanese Embassy but he was told that they could not give away photos without the permission of their Tokyo head office. He did not pursue this request anymore.

Interestingly, his photo collection reached nearly 500. "Some people are asking how I was able to collect this many photographs," he said.

But he chose only those are close friends of Montes, the rest are more as a surprise. They know that there is a collection of songs of the 1940s. Montes says recordings of war documentaries that include the Hirohito campaign in the Philippines, and even an original tape of the of MacArthur's famous "I have returned" speech delivered in Red Beach, Leyte on Oct. 20, 1944.

[illegible]

Across the **NATION**

[illegible]

Farmers' groups reject food coupons

Farmers urge hike in palay price from ₱6 to ₱15 per kg

By Ma. Elvira Lobrido
(PIA Visayas Bureau)

ILOILO CITY—Hunger stalks the countryside but farmers' groups here are too proud to accept the proposed food coupons from the government because these are "devoid of sincere and serious solution to the problem of hunger and poverty."

Instead of selected help through food coupons, the farmers want subsidy to farm products increased, food assistance to hungry families, allow farmers to sell to cut but productive lands, and stop the construction of landmark subdivisions and commercial inn.

They also called on the government to stop paying the country's foreign debt.

Nilo Ando, officer of Panaggas, a group of farmers in Pavia and Leganes, said farmers are worse off now 10 years ago. He said the cost of production is now factors of dollar, was from ₱10,000 to ₱30,000 from 1,000 until now.

The farmers, he added, failed to recoup when expenses increase the price of palay was sealed to ₱6.00 to ₱7.20 a kilo during harvest season.

Ando stressed that the average loss of farmer is ₱1,521 per cropping season or ₱507 monthly in the last 3 years.

The Department of Agriculture and production decreased because resources skills domestic ability limit but this is not true. There is a deep reason for that," said Ando.

Jenny Tallita, a farmer leader, said farmers in Bali and Guimaras are living with annually ₱6.00 only.

Data on malnutrition in Iloilo province showed a high prevalence of combined severe and moderately underweight children below six years old in 2003. There are 19,000 households underweight children while 1,000 are severely underweight.

The farmers said malnutrition is an anomaly in a predominantly agricultural province, rooted to be the food basket in Western Visayas.

Sto. Domingo leaders said they will not accept the food coupons proposed by the government, it ₱1,200 for every poorest family to every barangay.

Panaggas recently joined the local chapter of the Philippine Countryfarmers' League (PCL) in criticizing the plan of the national government to give out food coupons. The PCL said the plan is a dole-out and charity-type approach to address poverty. It might trigger more corruption and divisiveness in communities, it said.

The PCL wants to conduct massive information campaign to determine the extent of food lack in the province.

Joseph Lacson, the secretary general of the local PCL, said farmers hunger in Iloilo through coordinators would guide local government officials on what to do with it.

The farmers said they are smart communities, if only to show how long they have suffered and how it is drop in production and high cost of farming.

TANGLE
Workers at an electric cooperative risk life and limb to repair electricity cables in Baguio City during a recent power outage in the summer capital.

₱7M in equipment gives hope to ex-Moro rebels who turned to farming

COTABATO CITY—Farmers-turned-ex-beneficiaries of a government integration drive in North Cotabato got a boost on Wednesday with the turnover of about P7 million worth of farm equipment and implements.

In a simple ceremony, North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol accompanied by Vice Gov. Jesus Sacdalan and other officials distributed corn hand tractors, floating tillers and spreaders to the farmers.

Recipients of the equipment were various irrigators associations covered by the Midsayap-Sinsuangan (Midsinsu) Irrigation Project for Farmers' Assn.

Oyod, Midsinsu project engineer, said the farm implements would help farmers beneficiaries increase their production.

The 44 hand tractors, 40 floating tillers and 17 sprayers were part of the government's assistance to the Midsinsu farmers-beneficiaries under the project's counterpart component, according to Oyod.

He also thanked the office of its social component for Midsinsu and lobbied for the same with President Macapagal-Arroyo, noting that providing irrigation facilities would achieve nothing if support in terms of farm equipment, inputs, technology transfer and financing are not made available to the poor farmers, mostly Muslim converts.

According to Oyod, Maguindanao Gov. Andal Ampatuan has expressed his full support for the completion of the irrigation—first phase of which will benefit 6,000 farmers—and will make people productive citizens."

The President approved a funding of ₱65 million for the social components with an initial release of ₱10 million contained in a Memorandum of Agreement between the Bangsamoro Development Administration and the government of North Cotabato.

Armed conflicts brought about by poverty hindered development in the towns of Carmen and the municipalities of Pagalungan and Paglipuran in Maguindanao.

The establishment of Midsinsu provided hope to farmers who opted to turn down and confidence their only source and fight for government. Edwin Fernandez, PID Mindanao Bureau

Army says 2 NPAs slain; rebs say report 'drama'

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two alleged members of the New People's Army were killed in a clash between communist rebels and government troops in Gavino, Laguna just before dawn yesterday.

Col. Tristan Rivera, commander of the Philippine Army's 2nd Infantry Battalion based in Cavinti, said they brought their bodies to the town civil welfare and relief office in the municipal hall for possible identification.

Rivera said the encounter happened at about 5:30 a.m. when a government platoon was patrolling when earlier clashed with troopers, killing two soldiers.

Upon seeing the soldiers, Rivera claimed the NPAs fired at them, triggering the 10-minute gunfight.

But communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal disclaimed the slain armed men and said the encounter is "a pure drama of the military."

In a mobile phone interview with the broadcast, Rosal said he phoned the NPAs. Hilo Rural Committee, the rebel unit based in Laguna, who allegedly told him that they did not have encountered any casualty or engaged the military in a gunfight.

Rosal said the military "was looking desperate to save face for the losses they suffered in earlier gun battles" with the NPAs.

He said the casualties could be innocent residents in the area suspected of aiding the rebels. Jonathan Barrera, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

2 dead, 16 hurt as bus falls into ravine in Zambo Sur

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Two passengers were killed while 16 others were reportedly injured when a chartered bus fell into a 125-meter deep ravine in Tabud, Lakewood, Zamboanga del Sur yesterday morning.

Chief Supt. Fidel Querol, police chief for Western Mindanao, said Aileen Cabuay, a 41-year-old teacher of Sirawai National High School in Zamboanga Sibugay, and Apolito Laguna, 72, were killed when the bus they were riding in developed mechanical trouble while negotiating a slippery road in Tabud, and fell into a ravine.

The injured passengers were brought to a hospital in Pagadian City.

Querol said the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has suspended the franchise of Sirawai Bus Lines for three months.

"The number of fatalities could increase as there are more seriously wounded passengers," Querol said. John Mejella, PDI Mindanao Bureau

₱1.8B in shabu, drugs go up in smoke

By Jaime Bolanlor
and Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—An estimated ₱1.8 billion worth of shabu and other drugs were destroyed yesterday. Hours before they were ordered to run shabu laboratories in Mandaue City last month.

Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Director General Aleandro Avendaño led the shabu burning that lasted by at least four hours at the cement kiln of Apo Cement Corp. in Barangay Tabunan, Mega. 21.7 km south of Cebu City.

The poisonous chemicals used to manufacture shabu were separately burned at the Cebu Customs Terminal Facility (CCTF) in the bayside Lahug in Pardo, Cebu City.

The burning started at 11:30 a.m. and was finished at 6 p.m. yesterday.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, who was supposed to attend the ceremony at the Cement, was unable to come.

She was represented by Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, who pushed the button of the cylinder machine that burned the drugs in 1,200 degrees Centigrade.

The destruction was witnessed by Regional Trial Court Judge Marilyn Ego of Mandaue City, who earlier directed the PDEA to destroy the seized drugs.

The drugs confiscated by the raiding team in Baga were 930.1 kilos of chlandrine, an intermediate product in the making of shabu; 920.9 kilos of liquid solution containing methamphetamine, also known as the liquid shabu; 4,720 liters of liquid solution containing chloroephedrine; and 75 kilos of ephedrine.

The other toxic chemicals, including the 927 liters of chenyl chloride and 17 sacks of reagent soda or 25 kilos each, were also burned at the CCTF.

Before the destruction took place, Inspector Gaudencio Cinco, the Philippine National Police crime laboratory, examined, cross-checked and re-inventoried the seized items.

Ivan Franco, the electrical and instrumentation maintenance manager of Apo Cement Corp., assured the public that the shabu destruction would not harm the environment since the dust emitted from the burning would be filtered.

Also, there were no danger that the cement would be inhaled by persons since it requires until the moment it met an ingredient.

To determine that the chemicals were the ones being burned, the domains of the PDEA showed how to open prior to the burning of the illegal drugs.

Prior to the burning, Avendaño clarified that PDEA did not send bad no basis to link Mandaue City Mayor Thadeo Ibañez to the operation of the shabu laboratories raided in his city on Sept. 24 and 25.

Avendaño said Ouano cooperated with authorities in the investigation. Ouano was present at the burning site.

PICTORIAL REPRESENTATION
Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes signs a resolution of support for a bill that seeks to convert representation of legislative bodies of local government units. Beside the DILG head is Rep. Lorenzo Ang-Rinales, one of the proponents of the bill.

DepEd execs in a bind over textbook errors

'So what do you charge them with, stupidity?'

Even Lim said in an interview after attending a Microsoft affair yesterday.

"Clearly we're going to prevent this from happening again," he added.

On Sept. 20, Manila school students supervisor Antonio Calipjo Go called the public's attention to the fact that the 316-page Araw book used by second-year public high school students contained 454 errors.

After initially dismissing Go's claims, the DepEd admitted that the errors are there and that they would issue a memorandum prohibiting their use.

Brief history of errors

The DepEd first approved the textbook in 1997 during the term of Secretary Ricardo Gloria.

In 1999 and 2001, during the terms of Raul Roco and Edu Andrew Gonzalez (OIC, respectively), the DepEd procured more than a million copies of the textbook under World Bank and Asian Development Bank loan facilities.

"You want us to go after Secretary Roco? He approved it. You want us to go after Edu, Andrew or Secretary Gloria?" Lim asked rhetorically.

According to sources, the three evaluators who approved the Araw textbooks are from DepEd. However, the two have reportedly left the department.

Lim, who joined DepEd in October 2000, said they still had to establish why these evaluators approved the textbook with 454 errors.

Based on interviews with other DepEd staff, it appeared that subsequent evaluations in 1999 and 2000 just concentrated on the Araw textbook's exercises since it already passed evaluation in 1997.

The textbook has been in circulation for 14 years.

Since the DepEd approved the textbook during a competitive bidding, Lim said it was not easy to hold all Publishers Association members responsible.

"Attention to re-correct. Where the department is the one that reviews and evaluates [a textbook] and then says the material is accurate, to claim material you value the liability from the publishers [instead] is really not responsible and that's why we have to take more care in evaluation," Lim said.

More errors

On Oct. 11, Go exposed that there other DepEd textbooks have errors.

ABAD

"Kasaysayan ng Daigdig" (50 Philippine copy) for third year high school students and "Science and Technology for the Modern World" (Diwa Scholastic Press) for first and second year high school students.

The two science textbooks were supposedly disapproved in 2001 for errors, but they are still being used. "Science and Technology for the Modern World II" was even among the textbooks that DepEd procured in 2002.

Lim said it was not yet clear to him how this happened. He said it was possible that the textbook was produced, or submitted the next year and approved.

Go, however, pointed out that errors still exist in the textbooks' latest editions.

Lim said they have asked University of the Philippines faculty members to check the new history textbooks and the new science textbooks so they could correct it.

"Whatever they say we'll follow. We've already admitted that there are mistakes in the Araw book and we'll correct it," he said.

Go has also requested his demand for an apology from the DepEd for making him look.

Lim, who had initially lauded media on Go's part, acknowledged Go's help.

"Secretary [Florencio Abad] in his letter [to the media Oct. 12] did in fact acknowledge Mr. Go's contribution in this regard, also raised the issue and we're duly bound to act on it, including enacting the fact that we received in the way that we did. Now that that part is in the past, we acknowledge that the points that he raised are legitimate and should be looked at," Lim said.

To catch . . .

By Ana Abad

Most people believe they could easily detect such lying behavior, but in fact most have a good 50 percent of time, says deception expert Maureen O'Sullivan of the University of California, San Francisco.

But O'Sullivan says she has found a special group—just 1 percent of those she has tested—who can do this nearly 90 percent of the time.

"We call them wizards," O'Sullivan told a briefing sponsored by the American Medical Informatics on Thursday.

"Wizardry is a special skill that seems magical if you don't have it." These wizards have a special ability to home in on little cues that show when a person is lying.

She and her colleagues have so far screened 13,000 people for their ability to catch a liar on videotape. "We found 14 people who we called all-stars experts," she said.

They could tell when people deliberately lied about feelings, committing a crime or their own opinions.

How they do it

Most but 13 were good at detecting specific types of lies.

For example, she said, "There was a group of cops who got very good scores—they got 80 percent or more on every test—they got 80 percent or more on every test many of them did well on the videos about feeling."

Now O'Sullivan is trying to find out how they do it. She finds they have little in common on the surface, except a sentiment to catch liars. Some have advanced degrees, some only a high school education. About 30 percent had graduate training.

"They are located all over the country. We go down and go over the ... videotapes. I ask them to think aloud. I tape record them talking aloud," she said.

While most people know to look for certain cues as a person lies, these wizards intuitively find an individual's peculiar cues. One may shrug when lying, and another may make flowing expressions of disgust or even amusement.

"There are lots of clues. The problem is how do you put them together and how to make sure you're right?"

O'Sullivan said her findings would help train lawyers in depositions—for instance, federal agents or therapists who need to know when someone is telling the truth.

She is not sure about other real-world applications.

"We have made an offer to the federal government that it might be interesting to have them as part of panel when they have high profile investigations," she said.

What about analyzing the presidential debates between President George W. Bush and his Democratic challenger Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry?

O'Sullivan just laughed. Reuters

METRO

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4 suspected car thieves shot dead

By Tina G. Santos

FOUR suspected car thieves were killed in a 10-minute shootout with the Traffic Management Group (TMG) yesterday afternoon in Quezon City.

Although the four have yet to be identified, authorities believe that the gunmen were members of a car-theft syndicate.

The chase between the suspects and traffic authorities began at Commonwealth Ave. near A. Bonifacio Avenue, and ended at Luis Andokan Street, Barangay Bahagyan around 1:00 p.m.

Police said a green Honda Civic with the suspects on board was initially spotted at a checkpoint on Commonwealth. TMG chief Supt. Immediately alerted other colleagues as the car turned a U-turn point (XHR-736) that belonged to a certain Ronaldo Cato.

At the corner of Araneta Avenue and Bro. Domingo Street, a motorcycle patrol car flagged down the car, but instead of slowing down, the car sped off.

A gun battle ensued, and when the smoke cleared, all four suspects lay dead.

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza and Philippine National Police chief Director General Edgar Aglipay preach video 'karera' machines confiscated in raids from the National Capital Region Police Office, the Western Police District, and the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force.

COPS IN VIDEO 'KARERA'

Coddlers' time up

By Lolit B. Salaverria and Tarra R. Quismundo

FIFTEEN policemen in Metro Manila suspected of being protectors of illegal gambling operations have been ordered dismissed as part of the police's intensified anti-gambling drive.

Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), who was among officials who led the dismantling yesterday of 170 confiscated video karera machines, said "prominent names" from intelligence operatives named the learners as protectors of illegal gambling operations.

Razon did not give the names of the 15 policemen, but said the list included a former inspector (police captain), an SPO2 and a PO1.

Also present at the destruction of the machines were Philippine National Police chief Director General Edgar Aglipay, Western Police District Director Chief Supt. Hedcs Bueno, and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

The NCRPO chief said the move to dismiss the 15 policemen would put pressure on other colleagues suspected of coddling illegal gambling activities.

"This has been going on for some time now, and the people themselves have been turning these policemen as protectors," he added.

The erring policemen would be subjected to an investigation and would face charges if the accusations are true, said Razon.

Around 170 video karera machines were destroyed at the Bonifacio Shrine in Manila, with police officials and heavy equipment taking turns hitting the machines with sledgehammers.

Half of the machines were seized in raids in a month-long operation conducted by NCRPO operatives.

"Twenty were confiscated by the WPD, while the rest came from other districts in Metro Manila and from raids conducted by the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force,

"Three activities have promised income of police protection. I hope they would scrap the guilty policemen and remove them from the service," said Acuzena.

"The suspects, if found guilty, might say that they would just scrape. Excuse me, but they must be imprisoned," he added.

Atienza vowed to go police-to-rapped in video karera operations, and said that it was "public knowledge" that these men were either promoters of operators of gambling machines that allowed its patrons to lose lots of money.

"Video karera operations in Manila definitely wipe the protection of certain men in the force," the mayor said.

"We would like to rid Manila of these machines because the youth are at the losing end," Atienza added, noting that young people are its most frequent players.

Dialog is best–bishops

By Luige A. del Puerto

THE ISLAMIC CLAIMS Conference yesterday appealed for religious tolerance and calm as the project road-and-interview at the Greenhills Shopping Center settlement to break up, with new dangerous tensions arising about the political provision of the banish group Abu Sayyaf in the center.

The MAC, composed of bishops, priests and leaders of the Catholic, Protestant and Muslim churches at the forefront of the peace effort in Mindanao, also urged Greenhills residents to conduct a dialogue with Muslim traders, for whom the project route is being built, to clear the air and allay fears.

Archbishop Fernando Capalla of Davao City reminded those who oppose the establishment of the project route that a mosque needs at the Ateneo in Davao, and that even the Pope has compromised the Muslims for building the structure.

Closer to home, Mount City Muslims have welcomed the Catholic Prelature in their Islamic city. It has flourished there in the last three decades, Capalla said.

Still want to take a cab? Fare up today

By Cletus C. Barro

CAB DRIVERS that had submitted their petition to calibration, starting and ending will charge passengers a flag down rate (covering the first 500 meters) of P50, P1.50 for every succeeding 300 meters, and P1.50 for every two minutes of waiting time (excluding today).

The new rates reflect a 9% increase in the flag-down rate, and an additional P50 for the succeeding distance and waiting time.

Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Chair Rizalino Olivas Jimenez said that of the 62,000 registered taxis, only 1.6 percent or about 9,000 had paid the fees and charges needed to calibrate the taxis. Of the registered taxis, 5,700 Flo or magic taxis are not covered by the fare hike after a group of mega taxi operators filed a petition questioning the provisions included in the Sept. 30 fare hike order.

Meanwhile, transport groups said they would stage a nationwide strike if the government refuses to heed the fare hike they had asked for earlier was not enough.

Erap to have hard time in interview with kid

TIME Most about the declared assets of former Secretary Angelo Reyes came way way from left field.

Meaning, it was a bomb exploded from out of the blue at a peculiar time when everyone's attention is on no less than another general who's stalling every hot time, counting his fortunes in his hospital suite.

Four when I sit, however, the bomb against Reyes was so dad, an observation shared by many who read the account and who know Angie Reyes' intricacies.

One can argue with the way Secretary Reyes runs the Department of National Defense, but one cannot, a former official from the military establishment.

But throwing a wrench some against him is way off the mark.

Some well-placed sources tell me that two brothers, both in politics, had a hand in this and Reyes special isn't.

As Reyes said in a radio interview: "They can do as much, but in the final analysis, the truth will have its say."

This writer agrees.

* * *

Former President Erap will really have a hard time answering questions from a grade 6 pupil, Rosella Rose D. Pire, in an interview for the kid's school report.

The bandipantayan has allowed the child to interview the deposed President.

Rose are some of the questions to be fielded:

• What was your main goal in President?

• What was your routine schedule?

• How much time did you spend at work? With family?

If Erap will be honest, the answers to the first questions: None. Erap didn't have any goal at all. He thought his presidency was a just a game. And so, to Erap the goal is a bucket that one puts the ball into. It was all play and no work for Erap when he was the resident of Malacañang.

His routine schedule? Boring nightly drinking sessions with friends and mistresses at the so-called Kitchen Cabinet, connecting with women and looking for new sexual partners; gambling with friends, and spending time with paramours. That was his routine.

How much time did the former President spend at work and with his family? What work? Which family since there are plenty of them.

* * *

Three times in a row, Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia did not attend the hearing of two House committees investigating him on his alleged unexplained wealth.

Garcia refused to attend the hearing despite the assessment of his private physician, Jesus Villaseca, that he was fit to testify.

There's an old Tagalog saying, "Mahirap gabugin ang magaling sa tago" (A person who pretends to sleep can't be roused).

Garcia is not sick. He's just pretending to be sick.

Garage sale at Valle Verde 4 today

RESIDENTS are well advised to rush to Valle Verde 4 in Pasig City today for its village-wide garage sale.

The sale features 54 booths selling "okay okay," garden products, fashion accessories, rugs, home decors and appliances, old furniture, costume jewelry and other items at delightful cost to suit the budget of the generous giver this Christmas.

Car hunters will have a chance to test drive their favorite luxury car—Volvo, BMW, Porsche, Ford, Honda and Toyota, to name a few.

The car companies have agreed to a discount if a sale is made on the spot.

The sale will be held at the basketball court from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

It is also a fund raiser to extend assistance to charity projects sponsored by the village.

Those who want to avoid the Christmas rush by shopping for their gifts early may want to make their way to the village today.

Enter Valle Verde 4 either through the Ortigas Ave. gate or through Julia Vargas Street.

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ON TARGET

Kareem Tagle

BUSINESS

John Paul C. Morales
Assistant Editor Carmie R. Martinez

OFW remittances surged 46% in August

By Doris C. Dumlao

DOLLARS remitted by overseas Filipino workers jumped by 45.9 percent in August to $791 million from a year ago, its fastest rise since 1999, as manpower services continue to be a key Philippine export.

Without this contribution from OFWs, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the country would be in a dire situation.

"This accounts for almost 10 percent of our GDP (gross domestic product) and 14 percent of our current account surplus," Buenaventura said.

The BSP chief also noted that remittances from OFWs had a 300-percent value added while the country's top merchandise exports—semiconductors and garments—which had a high import content.

The August remittances brought the eight-month level of OFW inflows this year to $5.5 billion, 9.4 percent higher than the $5.1 billion clocked up during the same period last year.

The surge in inflow during the month was attributed to the increase in the number of OFWs as well as the deployment of higher paid workers.

Also aiding the jump in remittances were enhanced banks' aggressive promotion campaign and wider service coverage to attract more OFWs to use formal channels by improving the efficiency of remittance systems, expanding the number of remittance centers and increasing tie-ups with foreign financial institutions.

"The growth in remittances during the period provides grounds optimism that the country's projected 6-percent growth or equivalent to $6.1 billion for the whole of 2006 is achievable and may be exceeded," Buenaventura said.

Early this year, the BSP projected only a 5-percent expansion in OFW remittances this year, taking into account still-competition from workers originating from other developing countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, the deployment of more workers and the lower appreciation peso-dollar exchange rate increased the flow of remittances.

Bulk of the OFW inflows in August came from workers deployed in Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Korea and the Middle East, data showed.

Buenaventura said OFW remittances continued to be an important component in both the national income accounts and balance of payments.

"OFW remittances for the remaining months of 2006 are expected to sustain the uptrend with the onset of the holiday season," he said.

He said OFW inflows would continue to contribute significantly to the domestic economy in the coming years.

"It looks like the demand for skilled Filipino workers is still strong," Buenaventura said. "The only question is whether we could cope with our supply."

Through the years, the Philippines has been relying on huge remittances from OFWs to boost domestic consumption. In 2005, OFW remittances pumped $7.04 billion into the domestic economy.

BIR expands coverage of documentary stamp tax

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue has completed a draft revenue regulations that will expand the coverage of documentary stamp tax (DST) on bank transactions.

Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said that upon the issuance of the revenue regulations, banks will be required to pay DST on instruments that affect public higher character pertaining interest rate, among them special savings accounts.

The regulations will also impose a DST on passbook savings accounts.

"Actually, the revenue regulations will just clarify the provisions of the law regarding DST on bank transactions. We just want to stress that those bank transactions should be subject to DST because this has been contested by some banks," Henares said.

Banks were earlier questioning the BIR for asking them to pay DST on passbook accounts, claiming passbooks were not considered "instruments" and therefore should not be subject to the tax. The BIR countered that the DST was not really a tax on documents, but on transactions.

The draft revenue regulations have been submitted by the BIR to the Department of Finance, the BIR's head agency, for approval.

The revenue regulations will serve as guidelines in the implementation of RA 9238, or the DST law. While the revenue regulations has yet to be issued, the DST law was signed last March 31.

Aside from clarifying what bank transactions are subject to DST, the revenue regulations also adjusted the rate of DST and the basis of its collection.

From 30 centavos for every P200 worth of transaction, the rate of the DST on loan documents will be increased to P1. For transactions involving insurance services, the amount of DST to be collected will be based on the amount of premium received by insurance companies and not on the amount of the insurance policy.

Insurance firms had been lobbying for the shift as the basis of collecting DST. They said it was unfair that they would pay DST based on the amount of insurance policy because they do not collect payments all the time. They said they encountered instances when they were paying DST to the BIR, although their clients paid no premiums.

9-month BOP swings back to $44-M surplus

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' balance of payments swung back to a surplus of $44 million in September after posting a monthly shortfall for three straight months, bringing the year-to-date deficit to $376 million.

The January to September shortfall was much lower than the $775-million deficit during the same period last year and far below $222 million recorded for the first 7 months of this year.

The September BOP surplus was likewise a turnaround from the $129-million deficit incurred in the same month last year.

In clarifying yesterday, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the September surplus was exaggerated from the $1-billion global bond offering of the national government.

However, he said the net inflow was tempered by the debt repayments of the BSP, the national government itself and Petroleum Power Corp.

The government's latest bond offering involved the selling of additional Republic of the Philippines (ROP) bonds due 2031 and 2028.

The $500-million ROP bonds due 2031 were priced at 99.08, or 497 basis points over US treasuries, while the $750-million 10-bonds due 2028 were priced at 110.42, or a spread of 452 basis points over treasuries.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the economy and the rest of the world. Its major components are the current account and the capital and financial account.

The current account records trade in goods and services as well as transfers while the capital and financial account records loan transactions, investment flows, direct investment and other related items.

Any transaction which gives rise to a payment by a Philippine resident like importation or offshore investment is a deficit item while any transaction which gives rise to a receipt like exporting or inward remittance and investment is a surplus item.

Next year, the BSP expects to post a BOP surplus of $530 million, a turnaround from the $568-million deficit this year.

For this year, the country's current account is expected to post a surplus of $1.48 billion, an increased demand for electronics and machinery and transport equipment head export's rise image.

The services sector is also seen posting lower deficit due to the following:

- lower net services outflows due to higher receipts from travel and communications;
- due to visitor arrivals such as from the US, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and
- increased operations of call centers behind higher net receipts in communications.

ERC approves new rate recovery mechanism

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has approved a transfer automatic rate adjustment mechanism, replacing the existing quarterly scheme.

To do away with the lag time in the recovery of distribution utilities' generation costs, the ERC allowed power distribution to replace the quarterly generation rate adjustment mechanism (GRAM) with a recovery scheme similar to the much-condemned purchased power adjustment or PPA.

The interim relief for the shift was the delay in our recovery that drives to over 400 per bill to outdate. The distributors claimed they could only pass on their power supply charges to end-consumers four to six months after having incurred such charges.

For example, the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. said that the recently approved GRAM translated to additional charge per month 17.37 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh). However, GRAM, which covered the months of February to May, was only passed on to consumers last month.

The ERC yesterday said in a statement that the new mechanism would be easier for consumers to understand as whatever fluctuations in generation charges for a particular month would be passed on to them the following month.

The one-time power rate adjustment in rate generation charges declines at a rate value a distribution utility's (DISCO) has been approved.

Also, at the new automatic monthly adjustment mechanism will eliminate the lag time, consumers will no longer have to pay power distributors a certain amount representing "carrying charges" pegged on the 91-day treasury bill rate plus a 3-percentage point spread.

"The ERC lowered the electricity consuming public that, under the new scheme, the generation charge will remain as is pass on charge and will not generate additional revenue for the distribution utility which merely acts as a collector of this charge," ERC Chair Rodolfo Albano said.

Upon implementation of the proposed guidelines, the GRAM would no longer be applicable to distribution-only utilities.

Power distributors' final GRAM filings should be done within 60 days from the effectivity of the guidelines.

The final GRAM filing will cover the period from their last approved GRAM filing to the effectivity of the new guidelines.

The new guidelines would take effect 15 days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation. Albano said this would likely be published today.

Meanwhile, militant group Bayan Muna is urging Malacañang and the ERC to again allowing power distributors like Meralco to implement monthly power rate increases.

"This is bad news for consumers. We're going back to the old system of the PPA wherein we have to absorb monthly rate increases. The mode of collections changed but the essence of these unjust payment remains," said Bayan secretary-general Renato Reyes Jr.

BUSINESS

Banks' bad loans dipped to 13.8% in Aug.

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE RATIO of bad loans to the total loans of Philippine commercial banks softened to 13.84 percent at end-August from 13.92 percent in July as fresh lending expanded faster than the growth of non-performing loans.

The thought festival ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that the sector's total loan portfolio rose by 1.8 percent to P1.86 trillion, outpacing the 1.2 percent rise in bad loans to P249 billion.

Compared to a year ago, the 13.84 percent bad loan ratio in August was 1.12 percentage points better than the previous 14.96 percent ratio.

Excluding interbank loans, the month's NPL ratio stood at 16.31 percent—a bit better than the 16.54 percent ratio a month ago.

Also, the ratio of restructured loans to total loans went down to 7.44 percent from 7.58 percent at end-July.

Restructured loans during the period amounted to P139.76 billion from P134.79 billion at end-July.

The ratio of non-performing restructured loans to total restructured loans also fell during the month by 1.83 percentage points to 53.3 percent due to the downtown to restructured loans that had turned bad.

A debt restructuring can cover a whole range of debt concessions—including the rescheduling out of maturities, lowering of interest rates and, in extreme cases, the conversion of debt into equity—to give the borrower some room to breath and chance to revive its business.

But as more than half of debts restructured by local banks for borrowers launched down by the Asian economy crisis turned sour again, analysts said there would be second or third wave of restructuring for a lot of borrowers and banks would have no choice but to accept more concessions.

When the Asian crisis erupted in 1997, banks wanted to collect as all cost and were reluctant to restructure. Generally, borrowers was always the last option because of the building owner's stake real and other properties owned and acquired (Bapinas) as well as the costly foreclosure proceedings.

Meanwhile, the ratio of Bapinas stood at 3.66 percent at end-August from 3.7 percent at end-July, as the growth in the banks' gross assets outpaced the 0.5 percent rise in Bapinas to P208.09 billion.

The industry's non-performing assets (NPA)—combining the bad loans and Bapinas—were trimmed to 12.3 percent or P459.38 billion.

Meanwhile, the NPL and NPA coverage ratios fell by 0.21 and 0.01 percentage points to 52.01 percent and 32.19 percent, respectively, as the growth of NPLs and Bapinas outran both the increases in loan loss reserves.

At end-August, loan loss reserves stood at P130.56 billion while NPA reserves were reported at P145.20 billion.

The BSP expects the sector's NPL ratio to improve significantly as banks scramble to dispose their assets to meet the deadline to avail of the perks offered by the Special Purpose Asset Vehicle law.

The SPV Law intends to help banks get rid of their non-performing assets by resolving some of the cases and reducing fees usually collected in the sale or transfer of assets.

The law waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and value-added tax (expanded value added tax). It likewise reduced registration and transfer fees by 50 percent.

Gov't asserts right to apply tax reforms

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance yesterday said that only the national government could set deadlines on the implementation of measures to address the country's fiscal problems.

Credit rating agencies are reportedly exerting pressure on government to apply the necessary remedies to ease the debt and deficit problems. But the Arroyo administration's economic team is well aware of the steps needed to be taken and the urgency of implementing reforms, Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said.

"We already know what they have been saying as our problems," said Beltran. "We are already addressing them, and we are trying our best to push through with the solutions. We are putting deadlines on our own, which should be the limit of credit rating firms in entering what but we are succeeding or not."

The progress of the Arroyo administration's proposed measures are said to be going slow in Congress, and credit rating agencies, such as Standard & Poor's, have warned of adverse effects on the country's credit standing.

Another credit rating firm Moody's Investors Service is reportedly considering downgrading the country's credit rating if some of the measures is passed.

The government is pushing for the legislation of eight tax measures which, if all are passed, may generate about P80 billion in additional revenue a year and ease the national government's gaping budget deficit and ballooning debt.

The deficit is expected to stand at P197.8 billion by year's end, while the debt has already reached P3.3 trillion as of the first half.

Mirant's Quezon plant in world's top 12

By Abigail L. Ho

A FILIPINO power facility made it to the list of New York-based Platts Power Magazine's 12 best power plants in the world.

The Mirant Philippines Corp.'s 728-megawatt Pagbilao coal-fired power plant in Quezon is atop up there with some of the best power plants in the United States, Canada and South Korea.

"This is a testament to the operational excellence of the plant on all fronts," Edgardo Barcelona, Mirant Philippines president and chief executive, yesterday said in a statement. "The men and women of the Pagbilao power plant have done a truly remarkable job."

Among the criteria for choosing the best power facilities are environmental performance, efficiency and successful deployment of advanced technology, said magazine editor-in-chief Robert Peltier.

In the magazine's profile of the Pagbilao plant to published in its July-August issue, it said the power facility was chosen as one of the 12 best plants in the world "for running more reliably and steadily every year."

"This recognition is something that all Filipinos can be proud of as it showcases the world-class talent of Filipinos in running and maintaining a power plant," Barcelona said.

The Pagbilao plant started operating in 1996 and was one of the first facilities that helped respond to the country's power needs during the crisis of the early '90s.

It is also the first baseload power generating facility to rise country. This means that the power plant runs in constant load to address everyday demand.

Mirant is the country's biggest independent power producer, having stakes in power plants that have a total installed capacity of 3,107 MW. Of this total, Mirant owns 2,273 MW.

Among the plants it has stakes in are the Pagbilao plant (95 percent), the 1,251-MW Ilijan natural gas-fired plant in Batangas (26 percent), the 1,318-MW coal-fired plant in Pangasinan (92 percent), the 91-MW Navotas 2 plant in Manila (100 percent), the 4-MW San Ildefonso plant in Bulacan (100 percent), the 4-MW Hinoba-an plant in Negros (100 percent), the 75-MW Naga plant in Cebu (50 percent), the 37-MW Cadiz plant in Cebu (50 percent), and the 72-MW Iligan plant in Davao (20 percent).

UCPB may aid BoC vs illegal goods

By Reuss V. Dacuyan

THE BUREAU of Customs and the United Coconut Planters Bank have agreed in principle to develop a bonding facility that is seen to curb rampant smuggling in the country.

The BoC and UCPB have held high-level talks with the Bankers Association of the Philippine Industries and agreed to set up a special audit facility to act until as a guarantee mechanism for the BoC, Jesus C. Arrieta, a member of the UCPB board of directors, said in a statement.

Arrieta said the site would be made readily available to the BoC to enable the bureau to execute more effectively its authority to make compulsory acquisition of undervalued imports.

The Tariff and Customs Code mandates the BoC to make such purchases at an amount corresponding to the summary declared by the importer and dispose of the goods through a public auction.

Arrieta, who chaired the board of advisers for the de-facto National Anti-Smuggling Task Force, said members of undervaluation of import goods represent about 30 percent of technical smuggling cases in the country.

This trend not only deprives the government billions of pesos in customs revenues yearly, but also undermines the viability of domestic industries, Arrieta said.

Some importers undervalue their goods to evade payment of the correct customs duties and tariffs, he explained.

"It would put a big dent on technical smuggling if BoC can exercise its authority to make compulsory acquisition with greater regularity," Arrieta said.

He cited a report from the International Monetary Fund, which said that the country yearly loses anywhere between P50 billion and P100 billion in customs duties and tariffs due to technical smuggling.

Disclosures

MATINIKOA Electric Philippines Corp. will hold a special stockholders' meeting on Nov. 25, 9 a.m. at the company's Human Development Center, Ortigas Avenue Extension, Taytay. Topic slated for the meeting includes ratification of the planned change in the corporate name of Panasonic Manufacturing Philippines Corp.

* * *

GRAND Plaza Hotel Corp. declared cash dividends of P0.05 per share in favor of shareholders of record as of Nov. 3 and will be payable on or before Nov. 30. The company's general manager, Han Kit Siong, was appointed assistance compliance officer.

* * *

ASIABANK Development Bank Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 19, 2 p.m. at the 14th Ridley Room of Makati Shangri-la Hotel, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Oct. 29 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

VICTORIAS Milling Co. Inc. shareholders of Victorias Hotel started milling operations last Sept. 27 while the VMC Ram Hotel started its operations last Sept. 21.

* * *

LAUT Asia Power Resources Corp. will host its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 18, 10 a.m. at the Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of Oct. 28 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ALEMBO Express Philippine Long Distance Co.'s vice president, sold his 2,000 (.01 shares at P1,600 each.

* * *

SEMIRARA Corp. bought back and reverted to treasury 600,000 fractional shares resulting from its recent decrease in capital stock. All stockholders with fractional shares after the decrease in capital stock may claim payment for these shares at the company's office, 2/F of SMC Pavia Building Tamo Extension, Makati City.

* * *

ATOK-Big Wedge Mining Co. Inc. Big Wedge Holdings Inc. is changing its corporate name to Atlas Prime Opportunity Inc., the company's stock trading symbol will be changed to APO from ABG on Oct. 21. Executive Vice President Manuel M. Zalamea, PSE disclosure officer

Currencies

Dollar-U.S. Dlr. Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
Argentina	Peso	0.3509	2.8497	1.0000
Australia	Dollar	0.7273	1.3750	1.0000
Bahrain	Dinar	2.6525	0.3770	1.0000
Brazil	Real	0.3509	2.8497	1.0000
Canada	Dollar	0.7273	1.3750	1.0000
China	Yuan	0.1205	8.2988	1.0000
Colombia	Peso	0.0004	2500.0000	1.0000
Czech Rep.	Koruna	0.0351	28.4900	1.0000
Denmark	Krone	0.1751	5.7100	1.0000
Egypt	Pound	0.1667	6.0000	1.0000
Euro	Euro	1.2500	0.8000	1.0000
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.1282	7.8000	1.0000
Hungary	Forint	0.0050	200.0000	1.0000
India	Rupee	0.0227	44.0000	1.0000
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.0001	10000.0000	1.0000
Israel	Shekel	0.2174	4.6000	1.0000
Japan	Yen	0.0091	110.0000	1.0000
Jordan	Dinar	1.4085	0.7100	1.0000
Kuwait	Dinar	3.4483	0.2900	1.0000
Lebanon	Pound	0.0007	1500.0000	1.0000
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.2632	3.8000	1.0000
Mexico	Peso	0.0909	11.0000	1.0000
New Zealand	Dollar	0.6667	1.5000	1.0000
Norway	Krone	0.1667	6.0000	1.0000
Pakistan	Rupee	0.0167	60.0000	1.0000
Peru	New Sol	0.2941	3.4000	1.0000
Philippines	Peso	0.0182	55.0000	1.0000
Poland	Zloty	0.3125	3.2000	1.0000
Russia	Ruble	0.0345	29.0000	1.0000
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	0.2667	3.7500	1.0000
Singapore	Dollar	0.5882	1.7000	1.0000
South Africa	Rand	0.1538	6.5000	1.0000
South Korea	Won	0.0008	1250.0000	1.0000
Sweden	Krona	0.1429	7.0000	1.0000
Switzerland	Franc	0.7692	1.3000	1.0000
Taiwan	Dollar	0.0294	34.0000	1.0000
Thailand	Baht	0.0244	41.0000	1.0000
Turkey	Lira	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
U.A.E.	Dirham	0.2723	3.6730	1.0000
U.K.	Pound	1.8182	0.5500	1.0000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

FirstPac gets ₱450M from MPC shares sale

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

HONG KONG conglomerate First Pacific Co. Ltd. has raised roughly P450 million from the sale of its 3-percent stake in blood banking firm Metro Pacific Corp. (MPC).

The proceeds would be used to indorse MPC's business plans and rehabilitate debt-ridden shipping firm Negros Navigation Co. (Denasco), sources told the business.

First Pacific recently sold 196.2 million MPC shares, equivalent to 3 per cent of the subsidiary's 18.6 billion outstanding shares.

First Pacific raised funds to back up its commitment to provide its subsidiaries with the financial muscle needed to pursue projects and financial recovery programs.

Sources said it is also P1.28 billion to fully cover the rehabilitation of its shipping fleet.

Aside from funding Denasco, part of the proceeds would also be used to pursue MPC's toll-way project.

In a related development, MPC has offered to buy out minority shareholders of Denasco at 36 cents per a share, it said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday.

MPC owns 2.9 billion shares of Denasco or roughly 97.2 percent of the company.

Denasco last closed at 37 centavos a share, before its trading was suspended in March following the approval of the shipping firm's petition for a suspension of debt payments.

MPC's tender offer was set from Oct. 13 to Nov. 17.

MPC also approved the delisting of Denasco to allow the shipping firm to pursue its rehabilitation plan.

Denasco is preparing its petition for delisting so its withdrawal as member from the PSE.

Abenson targets 10% growth in 2004 revenue to ₱6.6B

By Rocco P.W. Domingo

CEBU-BASE appliances and consumer electronics retailer Abenson Inc. expects to post 10-percent growth in revenues this year, owing to its entry to the high-end technology survey market.

"We are expecting an overall sales growth of at least 10 percent this year," said Jackie Ong, Abenson's business development officer.

With 15 percent of the local market, we posted a total of ₱6 billion in revenues in 2003," Ong said on the sidelines of the launch yesterday of Abenson's flagship store at the Greenbelt 4 in Makati City.

Called Avant Abenson, it is the Abenson group's 23rd branch and was geared for the high-end market segment.

She said Abenson had two more stores opening within the year.

Ong said the company decided on a branch that focuses on high-end buyers to uplift the standards of shopping in the country.

"While we have agreements with our suppliers to get the first crack at launching their latest products in the Philippines, it does not necessarily mean it is their exposition in Asean Abenson compared to other stores," she added.

Ong explained that Avant Abenson was reserving 20 percent to 30 percent of its displays for home-color products such as blenders, flat irons and electric fans.

Occupying 1,200 square meters, with a total area of 1,500 square meters, the store features the latest models of appliances and gadgets from LG, Sony, Philips, Panasonic, Garmin and others well known brands.

Included in the displays are a TV refrigerator, "the world's largest" plasma TV at 61 inches, a palm-sized "spyder" video camera recorder which can store an hour's worth of DVD-quality video, or up to five hours of SCD-quality video, high definition TV home theater systems and camera direct photo printers.

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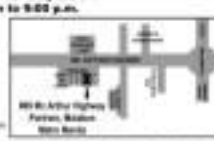

Bayantel pays ₱150M in interest

By Clarissa S. Balane

BAYAN Telecommunications Inc., the phone company of the Lopez Group, has settled annual ₱150 million in interest on its outstanding debt and was set to make another quarterly payment by the end of the year.

Bayantel chief financial officer Salvador Tinio said the company submitted to the Pasig Regional Trial Court and to its investors a term sheet to implement the debt rehabilitation plan, which the court approved in June.

"It is a working document which is based on the court-approved rehab. If there are objections, and as long as the objections are consistent with what the court provided, then we would comply," said Tinio in an interview.

The Lopez-owned telecom firm is restructuring about $477 million in debt, of which $277 million is owed to banks and $200 million to bondholders.

Obligations to banks are secured or backed by collateral, unlike the bonds.

But some of the phone company's creditors, dissatisfied with what they claimed was Bayantel's "unilateral approach" to debt rehabilitation.

They said that court-appointed receiver Ernesto Mendiola should replace all the terms of the rehabilitation plan, not Bayantel.

Jerome Arts, a majority holder of Bayantel's $200 million bond, said that the term sheet submitted by Bayantel was "not a court-approved rehabilitation plan."

The company said in a statement that the terms disclosed by Bayantel were not binding.

"Advisors to Avenue Asia have been informed that the creditors has not acted and will not act on Bayantel's term sheet. The receiver intends to file a revised rehabilitation plan within the next couple of weeks," the statement said.

"It is highly improper for Bayantel to unilaterally attempt to dictate the new provisions of its obligations under rehabilitation, particularly as when it is the Receiver's Rehabilitation Plan, as revised and approved by the Court that will govern Bayantel's obligations going forward," the statement said.

Tinio, on the other hand, insisted that the term sheet followed the rehabilitation plan.

"They could say the term sheet was unilateral but all the company is doing is making a payment in good faith. We paid close to ₱150 million in interest in September and the next would be in December," he said.

Tinio added that creditors should stop complaining because other removed was that Bayantel was discharging any interest on its debt.

The Lopez-owned phone company stopped making interest payments to creditors in 2000, due to mounting losses.

The company expected that its subscriber base had grown to 271,000 as of the first half, up 18,000 or 6.3 percent from 254,000 in the first quarter.

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SATURDAY Super

Write here, write now

MAC and me

Dude, ideas, computer. My life as a young newspaper columnist rolls off the tongue rather nicely

Age against the machine

Gina de la Paz

IN BETWEEN working on quadratic equations in middle school and Google becoming a ridiculously verb, I wanted so badly to become an artist. Not just any run-of-the-mill painter, mind you, but an ingenious nomad who showered his art in a futuristic Daft Punk clubbing situation. In short, I wanted to become a dance artiste. As expected, members of my entirely left-brained, hippie-free family didn't want their favorite flashbox to become anything except: a) a surgeon; b) an economist, or c) the proud owner of a 20-room mansion. "That's a poor man's job. It should only be your hobby," my aunt's theory went. So acknowledging the pragmatic wisdom of leery elders, I let the fantasy fade quietly in my head.

Now being aware of human nature's dog-eat-dogma, I resumed my trajectory life determined to finish with something close to a management degree. Before long, I dove into freshman normality and everything it implied. (I hung out with a bunch of rowdy 16-year-olds who also thought that boys were really good food and preferences were nothing but well underestimates. It was 24/7 unsaid. 8) Despite the freedom and the slew grades, I suddenly felt empty and cheesy, much like a "National Lampoon" movie. (Not "Any Wedoc" though. That ranked.) I really didn't know why I was mangoes-ailing as a business major when I knew I worked at math. It was denial, I guess.

As I struggled to find my place in the sphere of higher learning, I ventured majors in the very popular "No Clue Whatsoever" and signed up for classes as one else-numbered: Abstractist Cinema, Japanese Architecture, and The Territorial Peoples-chism. You know, the social stuff. At first, I thought these classes would awaken my inner human. Hint, but I was only half right. What really reawakened my kiddie pipe dreams were the creative writing classes I took together with bug wild for-mond children. At that point, college became a bona fide blast. There was definitely no turning back.

The world and words

Graduating with an oddball yet sizable mix of art, literature, Spanish, and...just-in-case add—marketing units, I then asked me to participate in a bigger multimedia experiment: saving the world. With a suitcase full of hope and shoppin' trainers, I first landed in Latin America and breathed in as much of the

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Write here, write now

Homepage C3

risk-taking, dreamsmashing spirit the region was known for. Following pitstops in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Greater Asia, I returned to North America once again to live among the celebrated "all walks of life" population, but somehow, life as I knew it had changed. It seemed that I acquired a better appreciation for solitude along the way. New York-based artist/woman-about-town Ash Oyang says, "A lot of people are afraid of being alone, but being an artist is all about introspection."

See, I didn't just come home with a few more stamps in my mangled passport. I also returned with insights, pictures, and words that occupied two fat journals, an idea I lifted from Sebastian Salazar in "Cruel Intentions." My inclination into a mini collection (the translator wasn't exactly what I had in mind as a 12-year-old). Still, my artistic inclinations are back slightly stronger than ever. Instead of misdirecting themselves as sculptures, collages and whatnot, my ideas were paraphrased into classics, sentences, and essays. Every noun, I was writing up a storm. Needless to say I found myself doing the same for the leading broadsheet in the Philippines—this one.

Dude, ideas, computer

I was back in Manila attending a party when an interesting person named Yin Yap asked if I wanted to become a Supers' columnist. Being out of the loop for the past, I didn't know anything about Supers! I thought he was using synonyms for "awesome" to describe the kind of writers I would become. (Ha. Little did I know that I would be here now, 15 months after, throwing down my thoughts on writing.

Dude, ideas, computer. I never thought I'd ever sum up my life as a young newspaper columnist in those three words. For now at least, they will off the tongue rather nicely. And why shouldn't they? First of all, I'm living out a real dream. Not everyone gets to put his or her point but vehemently dirty mind to good use, so I count myself privileged for the chance to be honest with myself on a national level. Next, nothing is perfect for breeding visual control freaks like me. I'm real fussy about linguistic minutiae—something I learned from Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Buru Quartet. Finally, I'm getting paid to write! Yes,

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
SATURDAY Spectrum

Tennis Envy

Men about town

Chuck Dy

TENNIS

those blue skies from.

Let me start my story by introducing my self: I'm a mid 20's male working as a financial analyst in a multinational company. I have this effeminate thief I have always treated like a younger brother. We used to do everything together, and he even introduced me to my current hobby, which is tennis. A while ago he was transferred to another branch (Cebu) and for a long time, our bonding moments were limited to occasional text messages. Now things have changed. He isn't the same person I used to know anymore. He hardly accompanies me anywhere anymore and it seems he is trying to distance himself from me. I haven't contacts my college officemates since going to medical school. I have now gone to myself unlike in the past. And I'm pretty sure he's playing tennis with them! I don't understand why I'm feeling this way, but I know I don't like it. My girlfriend said I have already split up because she claims I have no time for her (but in fact, I don't want to be with her anymore). Am I in love with my friend? How can I make this feeling go away?

THE PROBLEM sure sounds, as I have no other pointed out to my other sports-minded peers, is that it is an activity that demands another person to be thoroughly outgoing. Most sports require at least two participants to be sociable and competitive, but there are certain sports, which have no such requirement to be at least sociable. Golf, swimming, running, rock-climbing and billiards are just a few examples of physical activities that are often pursued in this sense. Even team sports such as tennis and basketball can be reduced to their elements and still be pleasurable as evidenced by the lone shooter on a basketball court on a sultry afternoon, or the single striker kicking around in a field by himself. Unless you consider competing against a brick wall a satisfying concept, tennis demands two people—like any relationship.

So here you are, all by your lonesome, hating recently discovered that you're regular playing pal, our kin dedicated to endless court and is treating the fun-crazed halls of your chosen efforts. You consider this a betrayal of sorts, a valid suspicion given that both of you used to play in tandem so well in the past. If that wasn't bad enough, you're spending your honeymoon romantic parties from the poor lessons you've instilled that her serve just isn't worth returning anymore. And to make matters worse, you suspect your new amiable fix in your court your male effeminate.

It remains, my friend, you're all alone in an open-air tennis court, and it may appear to your relationship woes. What? That's enough pun and sexual innuendo for this article. Foundation? (Crazy ka, ha!)

There are three reasons being dealt with here: 1) Why is your friend being so unfriendly, 2) why is this affecting you so much, and 3) what can you do about it?

Game

Tennis

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They can be Supahstars!

KRIZZIA
Style
Full name: Krizia Diaz
Age: 19
Hails from: New York City and Barbados
People say I look like: Angelina Jolie
What makes me feel like a Supahstar: The fact that, everyday, nothing changes (laughs); I always take care of, and I look up to my family.

ICOK
Style
Full name: Jennifer Mikaela Chiaokhiao
Age: 19
Hails from: Cagayan de Oro
Inflation song: "Smooth" by Santana featuring Rob Thomas
People say I look like: Lupita
What people don't know about me: I'm serious and romantic.

RONNIE
Style
Full name: Veronica Scott
Age: 20
Hails from: Sydney, Australia
People say I look like: Anne Curtis
My hidden talent: dancing

REIN
Voice Supahstar
Full name: Reinaldo Layog
Age: 19
Hails from: Bogo City, Cebu
My 'kilig' karaoke song: "A Whole New World"
People say I look like: Ace Wood, Sumitra Ballard and Pasha
My hidden talent: I play the guitar, and even compose (but simple)

Ibo Ego

KUKIE
Vocal Soloist
Full name: Mariolina Ilo-ahoso
Age: 20
Hails from: Pasay City
People say I look like: Jinkee Mitra, Mallory Paez (cute, thick Asian features, ;)) Mariolina
What makes me feel like a supahstar: my extraordinary singing voice, my charm and the Lord's will
My hidden talents: dancing, acting, dancing

ICE
Vocal Soloist
Full name: Ice Mascariña
Age: 19
Hails from: Angeles City
People say I look like: Amy Acid
What makes me feel like a Supahstar: My attitude. I think I was born to become a SUPERSTAR!
My hidden talents: I write scripts and direct plays and short films.

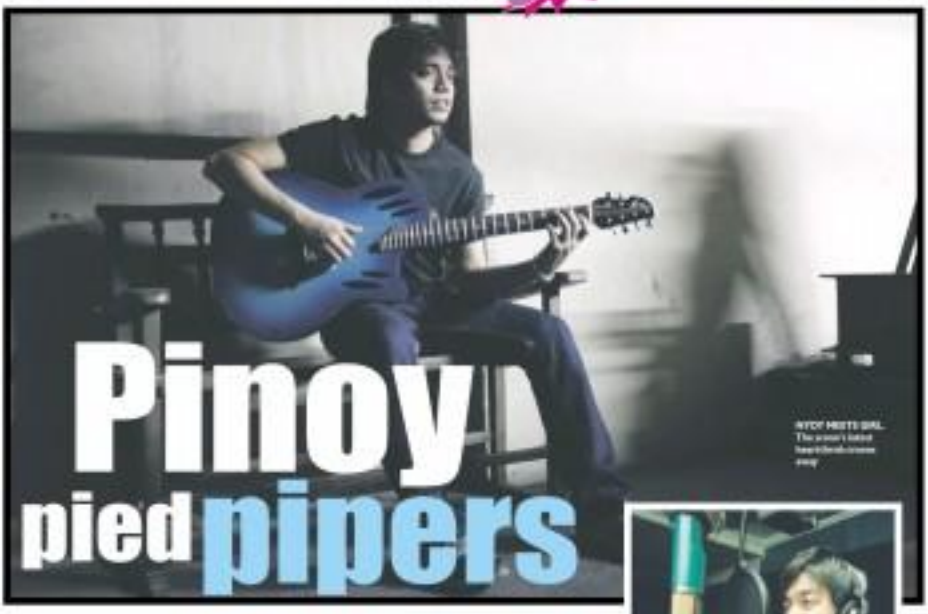
OWEN
Pop Box
Full name: Owen Cariaganes
Age: 25
Hails from: Cebu City
My 'kilig' karaoke song: "Man and Wife" by Usher
People say I look like: Alan Cardova of the Green Archers (it's chaaarrrrrr treek)
My hidden talents: I can play the guitar, bass, keyboards and drums. I can also (fake) rap and do Usher.

DODONG
Pop Box
Full name: Dodong Panugot
Age: 20
Hails from: Davao City
My 'kilig' karaoke song: "Kiss" by Tom Jones
People say you look like: Tom Jones
My hidden talent: dancing
What people don't know about me: I'm romantic

ICEN
Pop Box
Age: 21
Full name: Kenneth Dingle
Hails from: Baguio City
People say I look like: Jimboy Antonio Lipana, John Allenby
My hidden talent: Nobody do it

SITTI
CRIZEL
IDA
They can be
Supahstars!
MATT
JHIGGS
BUBOY

Turning Japanese



Pinoy pied pipers

NYOY HOTS SIRIL. The actor's latest heartthrob croons away

HANNOS ON THE HORROR. The many sides of Nyoy Volante

By Tim Yap
Photos by Jesse Nieva
Interview by Ziani Milan

PROMOTING popsonic music to the masses, Nyoy Volante and Maiane have struck a chord with easy listening denizens of the metropolis.

With Nyoy on the lead category, Gay Summo as bassist, Glenn Dale playing the Kahon, Jerome Pineza playing the violin and Maynard Alba bearing on the bongos, this breakthrough musical group rocked the scene with their unassuming yet distinct sound.

Yes, they do covers. Any favorite is Nyoy's interpretation of Angela Bofill's "You Should Know by Now" —their album was nominated for an Awit Award!) but they add that unique Monroe touch that makes the song easy to even groove laughin.

Super spent one night with the group while they were recording their latest album (with covers of songs like Medusa and Bread, Bread, Bread to be released this November) and realized the magic that these mates in spirit seems from a true passion for perform. ing—like true Pinoy pied pipers.

The thing about fame is that it's not what it always seemed to be.

The thing I love most about what I do is being able to express who and what I really am.

People might be surprised to know that: I miss homebody.

The most important thing I've ever learned is that: you can never know yourself well enough to predict what you are or not capable of.

I wish when I started off I've been told to just be myself.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that: I grew out of my childhood. I'm actually trying to find my way back.

And what taught this to me was: when I started to neglect the simple things in life.

The secret to happiness is: to know you've been able to love unconditionally and still capable of giving the same amount of love any place, anytime.

My best ever outfit consisted of a: jacket, shattered jeans and worn out chucks.

My Super Saturday night: scenario: sofa, hamgers, a couple of DVD's and my family.

The soundtrack to my life would include: the Christmas song.

STRUMMING his joy and happiness with his fingers

If I was invisible for a day, I would: eavesdrop on my friends and find out what they really say about me.

The thing that makes me most angry is: when I have a conversation with unbelievably unreasonable people.

If I was the most powerful person on earth: I would declare and impose peace among nations... or **if I'm not that powerful:** I'd own the biggest playground slash entertainment center slash kitchen slash bedroom-or-earth... or have the most video editing equipment you can imagine... or ride Gen Lee to marry me.

The best thing about family is that: they're there! no matter what! I'll die-hard!

When I'm gone, they'll probably say: There goes a happy fella!

If money was an option: I WON'T MARRY ANYBODY!!!

When I retire, I would like: a nice condo with cup holders.

The world would be a much better place if: prelude was a real person.

My hero is: my dad.

The thing that makes my life worth living is: that I know I'm never gonna hate the same day twice, but cut it's topping the last one I liked.

My greatest hope for the future is: to one day wake up with the one I love in my arms.

G SPOT. Gay Summo on guitars

BONGO BLAST player Maynard Alba

OUT OF THE BOX. Glenn Dale

WAITING TO SEDUCE. Jasmine does the soundcheck in her big concert

HEY was a show...

SERVICE DE LUXE. Jasmine taking orders for the Jasmine Trias

24 HOURS with Jasmine Trias

Island Spice

By Tim Yap
Photos by Rudy Espero and Jimmy Barcelona

WITH HER tranquilo charms, Jasmine Trias has mesmerized the whole nation. From the rain-drenched shores of Hawaii to the hills of Hollywood to the 7,107 islands of the Philippines, flower power owes its resurgence to the enchanting powers of Jasmine Trias.

Jasmania in Manila has started the minute she set foot on the "American Idol" stage, subject to the verdict of Simon, Randy and Paula. Now pitching a whole slew of products from facial cleaner to Fresh Bloo, Jasmine is busily taking the train for her first major concert to be staged tonight at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

Super-stalked Jasmine Trias from Singapore to Manila, followed her from Mr. Donald's to South Super to her fiesta autograph signing spree in Mt Maganda like a deranged fan let with some Jasmania fever.

Here, she takes time out to sign our Super paper book while munching on her Jasmine Trias.

The thing about fame is: it's not all glamorous as it seems, but it's all worth it.

The thing I love most about what I do is: that I get the opportunity to perform in front of thousands of people and it's a dream come true for me.

People might be surprised to know that: I need at least 10 hours of sleep a day.

The most important thing I've ever learned is: that you need to stay true to yourself and be a strong person.

I wish when I started: all 10 hours told that: it would be a lot of hard work. So I learned a lot of patience along the way.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was: that I lost my shoe on stage during a concert. So I had no one shoe when I was performing.

And what caught this to me was: to swap your shoes on tiptoe!

The happiest moment of my life was: stepping foot on the American Idol stage for the first time.

The secret to happiness is: knowing what you want in life, pursuing it, and then enjoying it.

My best ever outfit consisted of: a pinkish brown Kenny Kitten beaded top with silver green cargo capris with rock gold Kenny Kitten shoes and a chain belt with a flower in the set.

My Super Saturday night consists of: chatting and having a good time at a night club.

The soundtrack to my life would include: Love Is To

If I was invisible for a day, I would: Go shopping in a mall by myself. Privacy is such a luxury now!

The thing that makes me most angry is: No sleep.

If I was the most powerful person on earth: I would make sure that there was no poverty and that everyone would be living happily ever after.

The best thing about family is: that they're always there for you no matter what happens and they'll always love you no matter what.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say: that I was a good person and that I love what I do.

If money was no option: I would still be doing what I'm doing: being a singer, a performer, an entertainer.

When I retire, I would like: To live in a big house with my family in Hawaii.

The world would be a much better place if: there was no poverty and no war.

My home is: Hicks Says

The thing that makes me life worth living is: that I get to do what I love to do.

My greatest hope for the future is: that I want to have a long successful career and be the happiest that I've ever been.

PER BENCH IDOL. Fashion by Bench, food from Mc Donald's and top from Bum

LAY YOUR SMART CARDS. Love to Jasmine!

HY TRIO. Beirut Rose, friends Nino and Lynn for "Hi" CD

HY SONG. Jasmine with Sen. Bong Revilla

SIGNING in over Super! guest book

LOVE BUG HUNE. Here with Tony Mariano

JAPANESE with Tim Yap and Jimmy Barcelona

DADDY COOL. Rudy Trias has the cutest set of fans, ever!

SHOOTING the Jasmine Trias at McDonald's

CONCERT ROYALTY. Jasmine with Gary Valenciano

FRIEND day at Libis

Do you feel the pressure since you are the winner and everyone's awaiting for your album?
Parkie-to. No pressure. Because if it gets to you, you have and giving up. Now the just day long, recording, photo shoots and so... I always told myself not to over it at the same time, coz it will just stress me so with albums. I wanna take my time so that everything will be a-okay.

What was your most embarrassing moment in the show?
Diana De Guzman: I fell down the stairs in the middle of the show!
What have been the highlight of the ride so far?
CON: Yana: Yeah, the fans have been amazing, for me every body receives the reactions and support. I think every city has been really great.
Do you feel the pressure since you are the runner-up and everyone's awaiting for your album?
CON: It's hard to go into the album it's not just you put it out and expect people to buy it. You need to find a concept that fits you. We want to make sure that people can hear this artist in the music. So you can expect to hear some great albums from us.

Jasmine, what are your plans when you get to the Philippines?
Jasmine Trias: I have to make appearances for McDonald's, Bench and Smart. I have a big concert and a couple of TV shows. It's pretty amazing how I'm so big in another country and I've never been there before. So I'm just so unbelievable. It's really, really amazing for me.
How do you feel about people saying it was your voice that brought you this far into the competition?
JT: Professor: I think all of us have what it takes to get into the competition. It's not all about the talent. I think it's also about how people perceive you and having that "it" factor, the whole package and talent in a big part of it but personality is another big part of it. I think that's what all of us share in the competition.
What did you think with the link about the media backlash about La Toya jumping the shark?
JT: Well, it was a weird moment. Because I was happy that I made it to the top three but all the same time I was sad because La Toya left... It was a pretty weird moment for me but I talked to La Toya backstage before that night actually and I can't be gonna go because I in this one that deserved to go. And she said it's all for me, but no matter who goes, I think all of us deserve to be where we are at. And no matter what you think we are in American Idol it's a matter of how we portray our goals after the show.

Idol worship in Singapore

Text and photos by Tim Yap

SUPER! cheerios swooped on the top seven finalists of the world-renowned "American Idol" competition as they completed their 50-city tour with Singapore on their last pit-stop.

Yap, She is the last time that the much-revered "Idols" will be together on the same stage. One by one, Jon Peter Lewis, Bucky Wolf, Jennifer Hudson, La Toya London, Jasmine Trias, Diana De Guzman and Barbara Morrison proved to the Asian audience why they were all worthy to worship.

The Singapore Indoor Stadium was fully packed with fans eager to see the finalists who withstood all hurdles and challenges—comedy fiasco, Randy and Paula—and came out victorious through the intense elimination rounds.

Top Idol Bucky won a favorite, giving a highly-charged electric performance. Her rendition of "I Believe" brought the house down. By the last end of the show, she was dancing barefoot, jumping up and down the Singapore stadium stage.

Diana was a handful of nerves as she lead the audience into a gospel medley. Yet it was clearly our very own Jasmine Trias who seemed to be the crowd's favorite. The whole audience exploded with joy when she started playing the piano while singing her rendition of Alicia Keys' hit "If I Ain't Got You." Jennifer Hudson and La Toya London each had their share of high notes.

At the Idols' Inner Continental Singapore, we chanced up with these idols about their transformed lives, post-Idol. Some are producing their albums, others are giving interviews. One thing is for sure, though, as Jasmine aptly said, they are all "moving on," and moving up to a higher ground.

What are your backgrounds, La Toya?
La Toya London: Well I'm starting with a mixed Irish and Indian ancestry—I wanna put them lips to good use. I'll definitely come out with an album next year, hint!
What kind of music?
LTL: Just good music. I don't really wanna put a genre, but definitely music that feels good.

Bucky, is your last concert, [unsure believe that it's all over?
George Wolf: Yes, in a way, because we have a lot of great things ahead of us and we're all very excited. Being forever Idols is good!
What can we expect from you when you leave the tour and what's next would you produce?
GW: Well given that my Christmas ep, [unintelligible] is coming out! I've a little bit of that. I wanna act too, I wanna do it all. But hopefully it will happen.

Jennifer, tell us about your music.
Jennifer Hudson: Oh, I still can't believe I'm doing a movie. I just always think—oh gosh I'd love to be in a movie. And then all of a sudden I get a call for this movie section called "Dreams." So I'm not just gonna be singing—you're also gonna see me in the [BIG SCREEN]!

When you guys were told that you were coming to Singapore, did you know where it was?
John Peter Lewis: I still don't know where I am.
What will you miss after your tour?
JPL: We will not have our security guards! We'll guess once and often.
What can we expect from you when you leave the tour and what kind music would you produce?
JPL: I have been recording most of my days. I've got long ready for the studio. (Mind Kind? It's kinda like quirky rock 'n roll. It's underneath on three people.